

THE
L I F E of G O D
IN THE
S O U L of M A N:
OR THE
NATURE and EXCELLENCY
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

By HENRY SCOU⁴GAL, A.M.

A new EDITION, with CORRECTIONS and
ALTERATIONS.

By JOSHUA TOULMIN, A.M.

To which are added
MEMOIRS of the AUTHOR:
And some PRAYERS borrowed from
Bishop HOADLEY'S
PLAIN ACCOUNT OF THE SACRAMENT.

TAUNTON.

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BY HENRY SCOU GALL A.M.

WITH CORRECTIONS AND
 A NEW PREFACE
 BY THE AUTHOR
 M.A.M.



For sale by the
 Author
 at the
 Author's
 Apartment
 No. 1, Pall Mall
 London.



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P R E F A C E.

THE following *Treatise* has passed through various Editions. It was first published in the Author's Life by Dr. Burnet afterwards Lord Bishop of Sarum, in the year 1677. Four impressions of it were printed off between that year and 1726: when Dr. Cockburn published it with the posthumous Sermons of the Author. Dr Wm. Wihart, Principal of the College of Edinburgh published a small and cheap Edition of it in 1746 together with all the Prayers subjoined to Bp. Hoadly's Plain Account of the Sacrament. It has been encouraged and distributed both by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, and by that for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor.

This Account of the different Editions, and which does not comprehend all the impressions of it, affords convincing Testimonies to its Merit and Excellence. The clear Style and easy method of this Piece: the just and aimable Representations it gives of Religion; the practical Strain of it; the force of the motives with which it addresses the reader; the plainness and propriety of the directions it lays down; the warmth and energy of the language; and the prudence and charity of the Author, in generally avoiding matters of doubtful Disputation:

—These excellencies have greatly recommended it to the judicious and serious. The present Editor professes himself an admirer of the good sense, clear thoughts and fervent, rational piety, which run through the whole performance. On these grounds, he trusts, he scarcely needs offer an apology for presenting it again to the world, and for endeavouring to promote the reception and reading of it within the circle of his influence.

The Alterations He has ventured to make in it, are intended either in some instances to improve the Style where the words were in some degree, obsolete or uncouth—or to bring it still nearer to that freedom from disputable points, which was evidently the aim of the Author. The Pages, where the Alterations have taken place are below.*

* See Pages 2. 9. 11. 17. 18. 19. 21. 29. 30. 41. 42. 44. 47. 49. 51. 56. 59. 62. 66. 67. 74. 76. 89. 90. 92. 94. 95. 98. 99. 102. 103. 104. 105. 111. and 114. Most of the Alterations in these pages are merely verbal. The Editor has also called the chief divisions of the piece, Chapters, the subdivisions Sections, and prefixed to each Chapter, a view of the Topics, of which it treats: What is called Part the third in the original, on account of its length he has divided into two Chapters, and to preserve the method of the Author, has added a Prayer to the third chapter of this Edition. He is also accountable for a few short Notes, which are marked with E.

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If the Editors opinion of it would strongly recommends it to all, into whose hands it may fall: especially to the young and to the poor: to the former to possess themselves with just notions of true piety—and to the latter as a more excellent substitute for large and more expensive books. He begs leave to urge to render it familiar to their minds

Whom he would address on this point in the words of one of the worthy Editors of it. The careful perusal of this little work may, I hope, contribute to the further improvement of their notions of Religion, and to promote in them that rational piety and great goodness, in which they ought to be EXAMPLES to their FLOCK. It may also afford them excellent hints to be improved upon, according to the abilities God has given them, in their public performance: there are few Paragraphs in this excellent book, but may each of them be profitably enlarged into a Sermon. And oh! my Brethren, how may it put us to the blush, and what holy emulation should it raise in us, to know that the worthy Author of this admirable book, composed it before he was 27 years of age? What a spur to our diligence, that he came to the end and reward of his labours before he was twenty eight.

The Editor has nothing more to add, than that this attempt to serve the interests of rational piety and practical religion, as it hath yielded him very sensible pleasure, may by the divine blessing, which giveth the increase to all our efforts be very serviceable to many. Amen.

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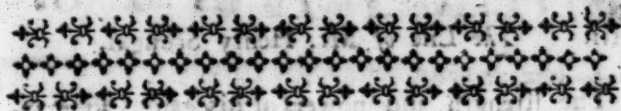
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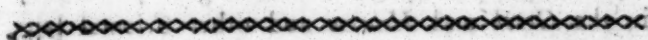
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The LIFE of Mr. HENRY SCOUGAL.



HENRY SCOUGAL was born about the end of June 1650. He was the second Son of Mr. Patrick Scougal, who was Minister at Salton and then advanced to the See of Aberdeen, which He filled for more than twenty years from the RESTORATION. Our Author discovered, from the earliest years, a genius and disposition, suitable to the sacred character for which his Father designed him. Though his temper was sweet he generally declined the company of those of his own age: and the amusements of childhood had scarcely any allurements for him. But he devoted the time, which is usually spent in the sports of that age, to reading, manly reflexions and prayer. He took great pleasure in listening to the conversation of the pious and learned men who visited his Father. He made himself master of the scope and contents of those parts of the holy Scripture which he daily read. He gave early indications of a mind inclined to the work of the Ministry, by little imitations of that function; and of an inquisitive temper by investigating in his own reflexions, the design of the mosaic law and the reasons of its abrogation.

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The strength and powers of his genius soon appeared from his improvements in literature. He acquired, when only a boy, a singular Elegance of Style in the *Latin* tongue; made a great proficiency in the *Greek* and *Hebrew* and other oriental languages; and was conversant in history and mathematical science. He entered into the spirit of the characters in the Roman story, and sought at once his amusement and improvement in composing Oration, and in personating with his companions, the Senators.

In the 15th. year of his age our Author removed to the University. Here his deportment was easy, modest and grave. His capacious mind could not be filled with the Philosophy then in use, saw the futility of it and soared above it. By his private study he became Master of that Philosophy which has now by its excellence and truth established itself. His devotional Taste endeared to him those philosophical Truths which gave right apprehensions of God and just thoughts of morality and virtue. The Essays and Meditations composed, in that period of his life and afterwards published, are proofs of this, and specimens of eminent genius and piety. In all meetings of the Students concerning the *Commencements* He was made President: and his discourses to them were received with the greatest deference.

As soon as he had finished his academical course, he was chosen Regent in the University. Here he pro-

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preserved his authority among the unruly; and conciliated by his kindness their affection. He was the first, who introduced into the University at Aberdeen the modern Philosophy; but he did not satisfy himself with initiating the Students into philosophical science without pointing out its utility to exalt their apprehensions of the divine wisdom and benevolence, and to beget purity and elevation of mind. He usually devoted the Lord's Day Evening to discourse with them on the folly and heinousness of impiety and vice, and on the advantages and excellencies of Religion: while he affectionately addressed to them apart in private those particular admonitions, which their peculiar characters suggested. Such was his disinterested attention to the obligations of his office, that he suffered some Students to be expelled, who obstinately refused to make the concessions and pay their Mulct that would have secured a pardon for their irregularities: though his paying it their name would have been accepted; and their expulsion was a great detriment to his own interest.

At the age of twenty three Mr. Scougal having been Regent for four years was ordained unto the Ministry: and settled at *Auchterless*, a small village about twenty miles from *Aberdeen*. He fulfilled the duties of this character with affection and zeal: catechising with great plainness and tenderness; reviving the use of lectures, or of commenting upon large

large portions of Scripture; preaching with plainness, but dignity; with earnestness and pathos, suiting himself to the tempers and understanding of the people and endeavouring to bring them to a constant attendance on public worship and to regularity in appearing at the beginning of it. He cherished with holy delight the first Symptoms of goodness: and esteemed it, when it discovered itself in persons of the lowest rank. He valued more, it is said, the humble innocence and chearful contentment and resignation of one poor woman in that place than all the more goodly appearances of others.*

In

* His practice and experience as a Preacher, qualified him to recommend as an useful help for the composition of sermons, the making of the Topic intended for the next Lord's Day, the subject of mental Prayer and meditation in the preceding week. To form a serious and affectionate strain of preaching, he advised a habitual serious attention to the glory of God and the everlasting benefit of man. And to preserve a humble, serious and grave spirit in the delivery of a discourse, he prescribed frequent recollections of the divine presence and short ejaculations towards heaven. He thought that sacred Eloquence extremely deficient, which did not flow from a heart thoroughly endowed with the dispositions the words expressed; and was not directed by a Study of the hearer's temper, and the choice of such reasonings and words, as were best adapted to impress their minds.

In the twenty fifth year of his age our Author was removed to a station of greater eminence and more extensive usefulness, being admitted Professor of Divinity, in the *King's College, Aberdeen*, by the unanimous voice of the Clergy, though his great diffidence and modesty resisted for some time their solicitations. In this station his great aim was to fit the Students for the serious, faithful and skilful discharge of the duties of the ministerial Function. As the great object of this is not so much the management of Controversies as directing men to the practice of religion and goodness and guiding them to eternal life, He studied rather to lessen than multiply controverted questions; contented himself with clearly stating the points in debate and pointing out the most important differences: while he was careful to take them off as much as possible from a disputing humour and a love of wrangling. After he had guarded his Pupils against the most common artifices of the *Roman Missionaries* in making Proselytes and cleared the most important difficulties in the Gospel; the particular subjects of public exercise which he proposed, were the pastoral care and casuistical Divinity. Once a year, in particular, when the College was full, he addressed the Students in a very serious and affectionate Discourse in *English* on the importance and duties of the Ministry. He always studied to render his private conversation with them as useful as his public lectures. He admitted them

them to free access to him: was careful to direct them to the use of proper books; and enlarged his own library with the kind design of furnishing it with a greater variety of books for their perusal.

Incessant Study soon impaired his health, and about the twenty seventh year of his age he fell into a Consumption, which wasted him by slow degrees. He supported his sickness with the greatest meekness and cheerfulness; not one reflexion on the divine Providence, nor the least harsh expression to any that waited on him dropt from his lips. His soul was rapt into admiration of God's goodness and was cheered with humble confidence in his mercy. When his Friends came to visit him, he would say, "He had reason to bless God it was not worse with him than it was." Almost the last words he spake were to this purpose: "When you have the charity to remember me in your prayers, do not think me a better man than I am; but look on me indeed as I am, a miserable Sinner." He died in the greatest calmness, on the 20th-day of June, 1678, in the twenty eighth year of his age.

The disposition and character of this excellent Man can scarcely be described in a more expressive as well as comprehensive manner than in this short Eulogium bestowed on him by Bp. Burnet, when he published Mr. Scougal's Treatise on *the Life of God*

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God, in the Soul of Man, He said, "that the book was a Transcript of those divine impressions that were on the Authors heart, and that he had written nothing but what he himself did well feel and know." To what hath been already said, it may be proper to subjoin two or three particulars, which illustrate this character.

He was careful to observe all the steps of Providence; expressed a grateful sense of its goodness, when his own designs were crossed; and aimed at an absolute resignation to the will of God, as the very life of all graces. — His heart was full of sweetness and love; which, strongly expressed in his air and countenance, attracted the hearts of men at first sight. His Soul was as wide as the world, and every man was the object of his good will. All the harm he could do his Enemies was to pray for them more earnestly. Speaking of his own failings was the insinuating art he used to admonish his friends of theirs. And when he wished to provoke any of them to piety or good works, he related instances of the same in others of his acquaintance. He laid by a portion of the first money he gained at the University for the relief of the poor, before he made any use of it himself, and thro' the rest of his life always devoted a part of his income to charitable uses. He was a sincere and hearty Friend; nothing so sensibly affected him, as the calamities of his Friends: while

while their prosperous events were observed so to cheer his Spirit as to have even an influence on his sickly body and in some degree revive its health. So far was he from wishing to engross the kindness of his friends, it was his business and delight to propagate friendship, especially among those, who appeared suited to assist each other in the practice of piety and goodness. In his very youth would he say ; "that abstracting from the will of God, mere curiosity would make him long for another world, it being a tedious thing to see still the same dull play acted over again here." And the hurry and designs of this world, he declared, looked to him like the scuffle of children and fools. He was indifferent as to diet; and expressed a surprise, when he saw christians nice and voluptuous, about meats and drinks and warmly professing their relish for particular dishes, as if their belly was their God. His coarse fare, hard lodging, dreary Solitude and want of proper conveniences against inclement seasons, when he resided in his country parish, were the talk of others and excited their compassion ; but were supported by him with perfect patience and contentment. No Events deprived him of his cheerfulness and serenity. He used to say, that as he blessed God he was not naturally melancholy, so he thought an acquired melancholy was scandalous in a Clergyman.—The freedom with which he conversed with the meanest and the affectionate attention he paid to Children

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were expressive of both his benevolence and humility. He was never known to boast of any of his performances, nor by affecting to depreciate them to court praise. He quickly calmed his spirit, when the natural warmth of his temper at any time broke out: the undisguised simplicity of his manner evinced the sincerity of those low thoughts of himself he ever expressed: and all who conversed with him were sensible of the lowliness of his mind.

Mr. SCUGAL'S Works consist of
The Life of God in the Soul of Man.
Nine Sermons on various Subjects.
Reflexions and Meditations.
Essays, Moral and Divine.

Which altogether form but one Volume.

He was buried in the King's College Church in old Aberdeen. and the following Inscription was put on his Tomb.

Memoriæ Sacrum;

HENRICUS SCUGAL
Reverendi in Christo Patris Patricij
Episcopi Aberdonensis filius;
Philosophiæ in hac Academia Regia,
Per quadriennium, totidemque annis
Ibidem Theologiæ Professor:
Ecclesiæ in Auchterless, uno anno interstite, Pastor.
Multa in tam brevissimo curriculo
Didicit, præstitit, docuit.

Gali

*The Life of Henry Scougal**Cali avidus, & calo. maturus,**Obiit anno Dom. MDCLXXVIII.**Ætatis sue XXVIII.**Et hic exuvias, mortalitatis posuit.*

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INTRODUCTION.

The Occasion of this Discourse.



My Dear Friend,

THIS designation doth give you a Title to all the endeavours whereby I can serve your interests; and your pious inclinations do so happily conspire with my duty. that I shall not need to step out of my road to gratify you; but I may at once perform an office of friendship, and discharge an exercise of my function, since the advancing of virtue and holiness (which I hope you make your greatest study) is the peculiar business of my employment. This therefore is the most proper instance wherein I can vent my affection, and express my gratitude towards you, and I shall not any longer delay the performance of the promise I made you to this purpose: for though I know you are provided with

better helps of this nature, than any I can offer you; nor are you like to meet with any thing here which you knew not before, yet I am hopeful, that what cometh from **one** whom you are pleased to honour with your friendship, and which is more particularly designed for your use, will be kindly accepted by you, and God's Providence perhaps may so direct my thoughts, that something or other may prove useful to you. Nor shall I doubt your pardon, if for moulding my discourse into the better frame, I lay a low foundation, beginning with the nature and properties of Religion, and all along give such way to my thoughts in the prosecution of the subject, as may bring me to say many things which were not necessary, did I only consider to whom I am writing.

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CHAPTER, I.

On the Nature of true Religion,

Sect. 1 Mistakes about Religion. Sect. 2 What Religion is. Sect. 3 Its Properties, as (1) Its permanency and Stability. Sect. 4 (2) Its freedom and unconstrainedness. Sect. 5 A principle of divine life; Sect. 6 distinguished from the natural life which is explained; and Sect. 7 the different tendencies of it considered. Sect. 8 It is more particularly shewn, wherein the divine life doth consist: as the root of it is Faith, and the branches of it are love to God, Charity to Men, Purity and Humility. Sect. 9 Most clearly understood by actions, especially by the life of Christ. Sect. 10 (1) The love of God exemplified in our Saviour. Sect. 11 (2) His charity to Men. Sect. 12 (3) His Purity. Sect. 13 (4) His Humility. A Prayer.

S E C T. I.

I Cannot speak of Religion, but I must lament that among so many pretenders to it, so few understand what it means; some placing it in the understanding, in orthodox notions and opinions, and all the account they can give of their Religion is; that they are of this or the other persuasion, and have join'd themselves to one of those many Sects into which the Christian world is most unliappily divided. Others place it in the outward man, in a constant

constant course of external duties, and a model of performances; if they live peaceably with their neighbours, keep a temperate diet, observe the returns of worship, frequenting the Church, or their closet, and sometimes extend their hands to the relief of the poor, they think they have sufficiently acquitted themselves. Others again put all Religion in the affections, in rapturous heats and extatick devotion, and all they aim at is to pray with passion, and think of Heaven with pleasure, and to be affected with those kind and melting expressions wherewith they court their Saviour, till they persuade themselves that they are mightily in love with him, and from thence assume a great confidence of their salvation, which they esteem the chief of christian Graces. Thus are these things which have any resemblance of Piety, and at the best are but means of obtaining it, or but particular exercises of it, frequently mistaken for the whole of Religion: nay sometimes wickedness and vice pretend to that name. I speak not now of those gross impieties wherewith the Heathens were wont to worship their Gods; there are but too many Christians who would consecrate their vices, and hallow their corrupt affections, whose rugged humour and sullen pride must pass for Christian severity, whose fierce wrath, and bitter rage against their enemies must be called holy zeal, whose petulancy towards their superiors

periors, or rebellion against their governors, must have the name of Christian courage and resolution.

Sect. 2. But certainly Religion is quite another thing, and they who are acquainted with it, will entertain far different thoughts, and disdain all those shadows and false imitations of it : They know by experience that true Religion is an Union of the Soul with God, a real participation of the divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the Soul, or in the Apottle's phrase, *it is Christ formed within us.* Briefly, I know not how the nature of Religion can be more fully expressed than by calling it *a divine life* ; and under these terms I shall discourse of it, shewing first how it is called *a life*, and then how it is termed *divine*.

Sect. 3. I choose to express it by the name of *life*, first because of its permanency and stability : Religion is not a sudden start or passion of the mind not though it should rise to the height of a rapture, and seem to transport a man to extraordinary performances. There are few but have convictions of the necessity of doing something for the salvation of their souls, which may push them forward some steps with a great deal of seeming haste, but anon they flag and give over ; they were in a hot mood, but now they are cooled ; they did shoot forth fresh
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and high, but are quickly withered, because they had no root in themselves. These sudden fits may be compared to the violent and convulsive motions of bodies newly beheaded, caused by the agitations of the animal spirits, after the Soul is departed, which however violent and impetuous, can be of no long continuance; whereas the motions of holy Souls are constant and regular, proceeding from a permanent and lively principle. It is true this divine life continueth not always in that same strength and vigour, but many times suffers sad decays, and holy men find greater difficulty in resisting temptations, and less alacrity in the performance of their duties; yet it is not quite extinguished, nor are they abandoned to the power of those corrupt affections, which sway and over-rule the rest of the world.

Secl. 4. Again, Religion may be described by the name of life, because it is an inward, free and self-moving principle, and those who have made progress in it, are not acted only by external motives, driven merely by threatnings, nor bribed by promises, nor constrained by laws; but are powerfully inclined to that which is good, and delight in the performance of it: The love which pious men bear to God and goodness, is not so much by virtue of a command enjoining them so to do, as by a

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new nature instructing and prompting him to it ; nor doth he pay his devotions as an unavoidable tribute, only to appease the divine justice, or quiet his clamorous conscience, but those religious exercises are the proper emanations of the divine life, the natural employments of the new born Soul. He prays and gives thanks, and repents, not only because these things are commanded, but rather because he is sensible of his wants, and of the divine goodness, and of the folly and misery of a sinful life; his charity is not forced, nor his alms extorted from him, his love makes him willing to give ; and though there were no outward obligation, his heart would devise liberal things ; injustice or intemperance, and all other vices, are as contrary to his temper and constitution, as the basest actions are to the most generous spirit, and impudence and scurrility to those who are naturally modest : so that I may well say with St. John, *Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.* Though holy and religious persons do much eye the law of God and have a great regard unto it, yet it is not so much the sanction of the law, as its reasonableness and purity and goodness, which do prevail with them ; they account it excellent and desirable in itself and that in keeping it there is great reward ; and that divine love wherewith they are acted, maketh them become a Law unto themselves.

Quis legem det amantibus ?

Major est amor lex ipse sibi.

*Who shall prescribe a Law to those that love ?
Love's a more powerful Law which doth them move,*

In a word, what our blessed Saviour said of himself is in some measure applicable to his followers, that it is *their meat and drink to do their Father's will* : and as the natural appetite is carried out towards food, though we should not reflect on the necessity of it for the preservation of our lives ; so are they carried with a natural and unforced bias towards that which is good and commendable. It is true, external motives are many times of great use to excite and stir up this inward principle, especially in its infancy and weakness, when it is often so languid, that the man himself can scarcely discern it, hardly being able to move one step forward, but when he is urged by his hopes or his fears, by the pressure of an affliction, or the sense of a mercy, by the authority of the law or the persuasion of others. Now if such a person be conscientious and uniform in his obedience, and earnestly groaning under the sense of his dulness, and desirous to perform his duties with more spirit and vigour ; these are the first motions of the divine life, which though it be faint and weak, will surely be cherished by the influences of Heaven, and grow into greater maturity. But he who is utterly destitute of this inward principle, and doth not aspire unto it, but contents himself with those performances whereunto he is prompted

prompted by Education or Custom, by the fear of Hell, or carnal notions of Heaven, can no more be accounted a religious person, than a puppet can be called a man. This forced and artificial Religion is commonly heavy and languid, like the motion of a weight forced upward; it is cold and spiritless, like the uneasy compliance of a wife married against her will, who carries it dutifully toward the husband whom she doth not love, out of some sense of virtue or honour. Hence also this religion is scant and niggardly, especially in those duties which do greatest violence to men's carnal inclinations, and those slavish spirits will be sure to do no more than is absolutely required; 'tis a Law that compels them, and they will be loath to go beyond what it stints them to, nay, they will ever be putting such glosses on it, as may leave themselves the greatest liberty; whereas the spirit of true religion is frank and liberal, far from such peevish and narrow reckoning, and he who hath given himself intirely unto God will never think he doth too much for him.

Se^{ct}. 5. By this time I hope it doth appear that Religion is with a great deal of reason termed a *life* or vital principle, and that it is very necessary to distinguish betwixt it, and that obedience which is constrained, and depends on external causes. I come next to give an account why I described

scribed it by the name of *divine life*; and so it may be called, not only in regard of its fountain and original, having God for its author, and being wrought in the souls of men by the power of his holy Spirit, and by the word of truth; but also in regard of its nature, Religion being a resemblance of the divine perfections, the image of the Almighty shining in the Soul of man: nay it is a real participation of his nature, it is a beam of the eternal light, a drop of that infinite ocean of goodness; and they who are endued with it, may be said to have *God dwelling in their Souls, and Christ formed within them.*

Self. 6. Before I descend to a more particular consideration of that divine life wherein true Religion doth consist, it will perhaps be fit to speak a little of that natural or animal life which prevails in those who are strangers to the other: and by this I understand nothing else, but our inclination and propensity towards those things which are pleasing and acceptable to nature: or self-love issuing forth and spreading itself into as many branches as men have several appetites and inclinations: The root and foundation of the animal life I reckon to be *sense*, taking it largely, as it is opposed unto faith, and importeth our perception and sensation of things that are either grateful or troublesome to us. Now these animal affections considered in themselves, and

as they are implanted in us by nature, are not vicious or blamable; nay they are instances of the wisdom of the Creator furnishing his creatures with such appetites as tend to the preservation and welfare of their lives. These are instead of a Law unto the brutish beast, whereby they are directed towards the ends for which they were made: but man being made for higher purposes, and to be guided by more excellent laws, becomes guilty and criminal when he is so far transported by the inclinations of this lower life, as to violate his duty, or neglect the higher and more noble designs of his creation. Our natural affections are not wholly to be extirpated and destroyed, but only to be moderated and over-ruled by a superior and more excellent principle. In a word, the difference betwixt a religious and wicked man is, that in the one the divine life bears sway, in the other the animal life doth prevail.

Secl. 7. But it is strange to observe unto what different courses this natural principle will sometimes carry those who are wholly guided by it, according to the divers circumstances that concur with it to determine them: and the not considering this doth frequently occasion very dangerous mistakes, making men think well of themselves by reason of that seeming difference which is betwixt them and others, whereas perhaps their actions do all the while

while flow from one and the same original. If we consider the natural temper, and constitution of men's Souls, we shall find some to be airy, frolicksome and light, which makes their behaviour extravagant & ridiculous; whereas others are naturally serious and severe, and their whole carriage composed into such gravity as gains them a great deal of reverence and esteem. Some are of an humourous, rugged and morose temper, and can neither be pleased themselves, nor endure that others should be so; but all are not born with such sour & unhappy dispositions, for some persons have a certain sweetness and benignity rooted in their natures, and they find the greatest pleasure in the endearments of society, and the mutual complacency of friends, and covet nothing more than to have every body obliged to them: And it is well that nature hath provided this complectional tenderness to supply the defect of true charity in the world, and to incline men to do something for one another's welfare. Again, in regard of education, some have never been taught to follow any other rules, than those of pleasure or advantage; but others are so inured to observe the strictest rules of decency and honour, and some instances of virtue, that they are hardly capable of doing any thing which they have been accustomed to look upon as base and unworthy.

In fine, it is no small difference in the deportment
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of meer *natural* men that doth arise from the strength or weakness of their wit or judgment, and from their care or negligence in using them. Intemperance and lust, injustice and oppression, and all those other impieties which abound in the world, and render it so miserable, are the issues of self-love, the effect of the *animal life*, when it is neither over-powered by religion, nor governed by natural reason; but it it once take hold of reason, and get judgment and wit to be of its party, it will many times disdain the grosser sort of vices, and spring up unto fair imitations of virtue and goodness. If a man have but so much reason as to consider the prejudice which intemperance and inordinate lust do bring unto his health, his fortune and his reputation, self-love may suffice to restrain him: and one may observe the rules of moral justice in dealing with others, as the best way to secure his own interest, and maintain his credit in the world. But this is not all, this natural principle by the help of reason may take a higher flight, and come nigher the instances of Piety and Religion: it may incline a man to the diligent study of divine truths, for why should not these as well as other speculations be pleasant and grateful to curious and inquisitive minds? It may make a man zealous in maintaining and propagating such opinions as they have espoused, and be very desirous that others should
submit

submit unto their judgment, and approve the choice of Religion which themselves have made : it may make them delight to hear and compose excellent discourses about matters of Religion ; for eloquence is very pleasant whatever be the subject : nay some it may dispose to no small height of sensible devotion. The glorious things that are spoken of heaven may make even a carnal heart in love with it, the metaphors and similitudes made use of in Scripture of crowns and scepters, and rivers of pleasure &c. will easily affect a man's fancy, and make him wish to be there, though he neither understands nor desires those spiritual pleasures which are described and shadowed forth by them : and when such a person comes to believe that Christ has purchased those glorious things for him, he may feel a kind of tenderness and affection towards so great a benefactor, and imagine that he is mightily enamoured with him, and yet all the while continue a stranger to the holy temper and spirit of the blessed Jesus : And what hand the natural constitution may have in the devotions of some melancholy persons, hath been excellently discovered of late by several learned and judicious pens.

To conclude, there is nothing proper to make a man's life pleasant, or himself eminent and conspicuous in the world, but this natural principle, assisted

ed by wit and reason may prompt him to it; and tho' I do not condemn these things in themselves, yet it concerns us nearly to know and consider their nature, both that we may keep within due bounds, and also that we may learn never to value ourselves on the account of such attainments, nor lay the stress of Religion upon our natural appetites or performances.

Self. 8. It is now time to return to the consideration of that *divine life* whereof I was discoursing before, that *life which is hid with Christ in God*, and therefore hath no glorious shew or appearance in the world, and to the *natural man* will seem a mean and insipid notion.

As the animal life consisteth in that narrow and confined love which is terminated on a man's self, and in his inclinations towards those things that are pleasing to nature; so the divine life stands in an universal and unbounded affection, and in the mastery over our natural inclinations, that they may never be able to betray us to those things which we know to be blameable.

The root of the divine life is faith; the chief branches are love to God, charity to man, purity and humility: For (as an excellent Person hath well

well observed) however these names be common and vulgar, and make no extraordinary sound, yet do they carry such a mighty sense, that the tongue of man or angel can pronounce nothing more weighty or excellent. *Faith* hath the same place in the divine life which *sense* hath in the natural, being indeed nothing else but a kind of sense, or feeling persuasion of spiritual things: It extends itself unto all divine truths; but in our fallen estate, it hath a peculiar relation to the declarations of God's mercy and reconcileableness to sinners thro' a Mediator, and therefore receiving its denomination from that principal object, is ordinarily termed *Faith in Jesus Christ*.

The love of God is a delightful and affectionate sense of the divine perfections, which makes the Soul resign and sacrifice itself wholly unto him, desiring above all things to please him, and delighting in nothing so much as in fellowship and communion with him, and being ready to do or suffer any thing for his sake, or at his pleasure. Though this affection may have its first rise from the favours and mercies of God towards ourselves, yet doth it in its growth and progress rise above particular considerations, and ground itself on his infinite goodness manifested in all the works of creation and providence. A Soul thus possess'd
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with divine love, must needs be enlarged towards all mankind in a sincere and unbounded affection, because of the Relation they have to God being his creatures, and having something of his image stamped upon them : and this is that *Charity* I named as the second branch of Religion, and under which all the parts of justice, all the duties we owe to our neighbour are eminently comprehended : for he who doth truly love all the world will be nearly concerned in the interest of every one, and so far from wronging or injuring any person, that he will resent any injury that befalls others, as if it happened to himself.

By *Purity* I understand a due abstractedness from the body, and mastery over the inferior appetites : or such a temper and disposition of mind, as makes a man despise and abstain from all pleasures and delights of sense or fancy which are sinful in themselves, or tend to extinguish or lessen our relish of more divine and intellectual pleasures, which doth also infer a resoluteness to undergo all those hardships, he may meet with in the performance of his duty : so that not only chastity and temperance, but also christian courage and magnanimity may come under this head.

Humility imports a deep sense of our own meanness, with a hearty and affectionate acknowledgement

of our owing all that we are to the divine bounty ; which is always accompanied with a profound submission to the will of God, and great deadness towards the glory of the world, and the applause of men.

These are the highest perfections that either men or angels are capable of, the very foundation of heaven laid in the soul, and he who hath attained them needs not desire to pry into the hidden rolls of God's decrees, or search the volumes of Heaven to know what is determined about his everlasting condition ; but he may find a copy of God's thoughts concerning him written in his own breast. His love to God may give him assurance of God's favour to him and those beginnings of happiness which he feels in the conformity of the powers of his Soul to the nature of God and compliance with his will, are a sure pledge that his felicity will be perfected and continued to all eternity : And it is not without reason that one said, *I had rather see the real impressions of a God-like nature upon my own Soul, than have a vision from Heaven, or an Angel sent to tell me that my name were enrolled in the book of life.*

Self. 9. When we have said all that we can, the inward affections of a new nature and divine life can never be sufficiently expressed; language and words cannot reach them ; nor can they be truly understood

understood but by those Souls that are enkindled within; and awakened unto the sense and relish of spiritual things, *There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth this understanding.* The power and life of Religion may be better expressed in actions than in words, because actions are more lively things, and do better represent the inward principles whence they proceed, and therefore we may take the best measure of those gracious endowments, from the deportment of those in whom they reside, especially as they are perfectly exemplified in the holy life of our blessed Saviour; a main part of whose business in this world was to teach by his practice what he did require of others, and to make his own conversation an exact resemblance of those unparallell'd rules which he prescribed: so that if ever true goodness was visible to mortal eyes it was when his presence did beautify and illustrate this lower world.

Seet. 10. That sincere and devout affection where- with his blessed Soul did constantly burn towards his heavenly Father, did express itself in an entire resignation to his will, it was this that was his *very meat to do the will, and finish the work of him that sent him.* This was the exercise of his childhood, and the constant employment of his riper age, he spared no travail or pains while he was about his Father's business, but took such infinite

content

content and satisfaction in the performance of it, that when being faint and weary with his journey he rested himself on *Jacob's* well, and intreated water of the *Samaritane* woman; the success of his conference with her, and the accession that he made to the kingdom of God, filled his mind with such delight, as seemed to have redounded to his very body, refreshing his spirits, and making him forget the thirst whereof he complained before, and refuse the meat which he had sent his disciples to buy. Nor was he less patient and submissive in suffering the will of God, than diligent in doing of it: he endured the sharpest afflictions, and extreamest miseries that ever were inflicted on any mortal, without a repining thought, or discontented word. For tho' he was far from a stupid insensibility, or a phantastic or stoical obstinacy, and had as quick a sense of pain as other men, and the deepest apprehension of what he was to suffer in his Soul, (as his bloody sweat, and the sore amazement and sorrow which he professes do abundantly declare) yet did he intirely submit to that severe dispensation of providence, and willingly acquiesced in it.

And he prayed to God, that *if it were possible* or (as one of the evangelists hath it,) *if he were willing that cup might be removed*: yet he gently added, *nevertheles not my will but thine be done*. Of what strange importance are the expressions, *John*

12. 27 where he first acknowledgeth the anguish of his spirit, *Now is my Soul troubled*, which would seem to produce a kind of demurre, *And what shall I say* ; and then he goes to deprecate his sufferings, *Father, save me from this hour* ; which he had no sooner uttered, but he doth as it were, on second thoughts recal it in these words, *But for this cause came I into the world* ; and concludes, *Father glorify thy Name*. Now we must not look on this as any levity, or blameable weakness in the blessed Jesus ; he knew all along what he was to suffer, and did most resolutely undergo it ; but it shews us the unconceivable weight and pressure he was to bear, which being so afflicting and contrary to nature, he could not think of without terrour ; yet considering the will of God, and the glory which was to redound to him from thence, he was not only content but desirous to suffer it.

Another instance of his love to God, was his delight in conversing with him by prayer, which made him frequently retire himself from the world, and with the greatest devotion and pleasure spend whole nights in that heavenly exercise, though he had no sins to confess and but few secular interests for which to pray ; that alas ! are almost the only things that are wont to drive us to our devotions : may we may say his whole life was a kind of prayer, a constant

stant course of communion with God : if the sacrifice was not always offering, yet was the fire still kept alive : nor was ever the blessed Jesus surpris'd with that dulness or langour of spirit which we must many times wrestle with, before we can be fit for the exercise of devotion.

Seet. 11. In the second place I shall speak of his love and charity towards all men, but he who would express it, must transcribe the history of the Gospel, and comment upon it: for scarce anything is recorded to have been done or spoken by him, which was not designed for the good and advantage of some one or other. All his miraculous works were instances of his goodness as well as his power; and they benefited those on whom they were wrought as well as they amazed the beholders. His charity was not confined to his kindred, or relations; nor was all his kindness swallowed up in the endearments of that peculiar friendship which he carried towards his beloved disciple, but every one was his friend who obeyed his holy commands, *John 15. 4.* and *whosoever did the will of his Father*, the same was to him as his brother, and sister, and mother.

Never was any unwelcome to him who came with an honest intention, nor did he deny any request which tended to the good of those that asked

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it : So that what was spoken of that Roman Empe-
rour† whom for his goodness they called the *darling*
of mankind, was really performed by him, that ne-
ver any departed from him with a heavy counte-
nance, except the rich youth, *Mark 10.* who was
sorry to hear that the kingdom of heaven stood at
so high a rate, and that he could not save his Soul
and his money too. And certainly it troubled our
Saviour to see that when a price was in his hand
to get wisdom, yet he had no heart to it ; ‡ the
ingenuity that appeared in his first address,
had already procured some kindness for him ;
for it is said, *And Jesus beholding him, loved him :*
But must he for his sake cut out a new way to hea-
ven, and alter the nature of things, which makes it
impossible that a covetous man should be happy ?

And what shall I speak of his meekness, who
could encounter the monstrous ingratitude and dis-
simulation of that miscreant who betrayed him, in
no harsher terms than these, *Judas betrayest thou the*
Son of Man with a kiss ? What further evidence
could

† TITUS.

‡ “ *The matter was of no less concern, (observes the
excellent Mr. Emlyn) than his everlasting Salvation,
and pity it were that it should miscarry: that any one
who had a concern to be saved should drop short; or that
any who came to Christ should go away sorrowful.*” E.

could we desire of his fervent and unbounded charity, than that he willingly laid down his life even for his most bitter enemies; and mingling his prayers with his blood, besought his Father that his death might not be laid to their charge, but might become the means of eternal life to those very persons who procured it?

Secl. 12. The third branch of the divine life is *purity*, which, as I said, consists in a neglect of worldly enjoyments and accommodations, and a resolute enduring of all such troubles as we meet with in the doing of our duty. Now surely if ever any person was wholly dead to all the pleasures of the natural life, it was the blessed Jesus, who seldom tasted them when they came in his way; but never stept out of his way to seek them. Tho' he allowed others the comforts of wedlock, and honoured marriage with his presence, yet he chose the severity of a virgin life, and never knew the nuptial bed: and tho' at the same time he supplied the want of wine with a miracle, yet he would not work one for the relief of his own hunger in the wilderness. So gracious and divine was the temper of his Soul in allowing to others such lawful gratifications as himself thought good to abstain from, and supplying not only their more extream and pressing necessities, but also their smaller and less considerable wants.

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We many times hear of our Saviour's sighs & groans & tears ; but never that he laught, and but once that he rejoiced in spirit : so that through his whole life he did exactly answer that character given of him by the prophet of old, that he was *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*. Nor were his troubles and want of the accomodations of life other than matter of choice ; for never did there any appear on the stage of the world with greater advantages to have raised himself to the highest earthly felicity. He who could bring together such a prodigious number of fishes into his disciples net ; and at another time receive that tribute from a fish which he was to pay to the temple, might easily have made himself the richest person in the world. Nay without any mony he could have maintained an army powerful enough to have dispossessed *Cesar* of his throne: having oftener than once fed several thousands with a few loaves and small fishes. But to shew how small esteem he had for all the enjoyments in the world, he chose to live in so poor and mean a condition, that though the foxes had holes, & the birds of the air had nests, yet he who was Lord and Heir of all things, had not whereon to lay his head : He did not frequent the courts of princes, nor affect the acquaintance and converse of great ones ; but being reputed the son of a carpenter, he had fishermen and such other poor people for his compani-

ons, and lived at such a rate as suited the meannells of that condition.

Sett. 13. And thus I am brought unawares to speak of his *humility*, the last branch of the divine life, wherein he was a most eminent pattern to us, that we might learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart To reflect only on our Saviour's lowly and humble deportment while he was in the world. He had none of those sins and imperfections which may justly humble the best of men, but he was so entirely swallowed up with a deep sense of the infinite perfections of God, that he appeared as nothing in his own eyes. He considered those eminent perfections which shined in his blessed Soul as not his own, but the gifts of God; and therefore assumed nothing to himself for them, but with the profoundest humility renounced all pretences to them. Hence did he refuse that ordinary compellation of good Master: *why callest thou me good? there is none good, but God only.* As if he had said, the goodness of any as divine and great as thou takest me to be is not worthy to be named or taken notice of; 'tis God alone who is originally and essentially good. He never made use of his miraculous power for vanity or ostentation, he would not gratify the curiosity of the Jews with a sign from Heaven, some prodigious appearance in the air: nor would he follow the

the advice of his countrymen and kindred, who would have had all his great works performed in the eyes of the world for gaining him the greater fame. But when his charity had prompted him to the relief of the miserable, his humility made him many times enjoyn the concealment of the miracle; and when the glory of God, and the design for which he came into the world required the publication of them, he ascribed the honour of all to his Father, telling them *That of himself he was able to do nothing,*

I cannot insist on all the instances of humility in his deportment towards men; his withdrawing himself when they would have made him a King, his subjection not only to his blessed mother, but to her husband during his younger years, and his submission to all the indignities and affronts, which his rude and malicious enemies did put upon him. The history of his holy life, recorded by those who conversed with him, is full of such passages as these: and indeed the serious and attentive study of it, is the best way to get right measures of humility, and all the other parts of Religion, which I have been endeavouring to describe.

But now that I may lessen your trouble of reading a long letter by making some pauses in it; let me here subjoin a prayer that might be proper when one who had formerly entertained some false notions of Religion, begins to discover what it is.

A PRAYER.

' **I**NFINITE and eternal majesty, author and
 ' fountain of being and blessedness, how little do we
 ' poor sinful creatures know of thee, or the way to serve
 ' thee? We talk of Religion, and pretend unto it; but
 ' alas! how few are there that know and consider what
 ' it means? How easily do we mistake the affections
 ' of our nature, and issues of self-love, for those divine
 ' graces which alone can render us acceptable in thy
 ' sight? It may justly grieve me to consider, that I
 ' should have wandered so long, and contented myself so
 ' often with vain shadows and false images of Piety and
 ' Religion; yet I cannot but acknowledge and adore
 ' thy goodness, who hast been pleased in some measure to
 ' open mine eyes, and let me see what it is at which I
 ' ought to aim. I rejoice to consider what mighty im-
 ' provements my nature is capable of, and what a divine
 ' temper of spirit doth shine in those whom thou art
 ' pleased to choose, and causest to approach unto thee.
 ' Blessed be thine infinite mercy who sentest thine own
 ' Son to dwell among men, and instruct them by his ex-
 ' ample as well as his laws, giving them a perfect pat-
 ' tern of what they ought to be. O that the holy life
 ' of the blessed Jesus may be always in my thoughts, and
 ' before mine eyes, till I receive a deep sense and impres-
 ' sion of those excellent graces that shined so eminently
 ' in him, and let me never cease my endeavours till that
 ' new and divine nature prevail in my Soul, and Christ
 ' be formed within me.

CHAPTER, II.

The Excellency & Advantage of Religion.

Sect. 1 A general view of the Excellency and Advantage of Religion. Sect. 2 A more particular view of this subject; as (1) The Excellency of divine Love. Sect. 3 The advantage of divine Love, which is to be estimated. Sect. 4 (1) from the worth of the Object. Sect. 5 (2) From the certainty of a return of Affection. Sect. 6 (3) From the presence of the Object. Sect. 7 (4) From the infinite happiness it yields. Sect. 7 (5) From the sweetness it diffuses through all dispensations. Sect. 9 (6) From the delight which it communicates to all religious duties. Sect. 10 (II) The excellency of universal Charity and Love. Sect. 11 The pleasure that attends it. Sect. 12 (III) The excellency of Purity. Sect. 13 The delight it affords. Sect. 14 (IV) The excellency of Humility. Sect. 15 The pleasure and sweetness of an humble Temper. A Prayer.

AND now my dear Friend, having discovered the nature of true Religion, before I proceed any further, it will not perhaps be unfit to fix our meditations a little on the excellency and advantages of it, that we may be excited to the more vigorous and diligent prosecution of those methods whereby we may attain so great a felicity. But alas! what words

words shall we find to express that inward satisfaction, those hidden pleasures which can never be rightly understood, but by those holy Souls who feel them? *a stranger intermedleth not with their joy.* Holiness is the right temper, the vigorous and healthful constitution of the soul; its faculties had formerly been enfeebled, and disordered, so that they could not exercise their natural functions; it had wearied itself with endless tossings and rollings, and was never able to find any rest: now that distemper being removed, it feels itself well, there is a due harmony in its faculties, and a sprightly vigour possesseth every part. The understanding can discern what is good, and the will can cleave unto it, the affections are not tied to the motions of sense and the influence of external objects; but they are stirred up by more divine impressions, are touched by a sense of invisible things.

Secd. 2. Let us descend if you please, into a nearer and more particular view of Religion, in those several branches of it which were named before, let us consider that love and affection wherewith holy Souls are united to God, that we may see what excellency and felicity is involved in it. Love is that powerful and prevalent passion, by which all the faculties and inclinations of the Soul are determined, and on which both its perfection and happiness depend. The worth and excellency of a Soul is to be measured by

by the object of its love: he who loveth mean and
 fordid things, doth thereby become base and vile ;
 but a noble and well-placed affection doth advance
 and improve the spirit unto a conformity with the
 perfections which it loves. The images of these
 do frequently present themselves unto the mind, and
 by a secret force and energy insinuate into the very
 constitution of the Soul, and mould and fashion it
 unto its own likeness. Hence we may see how ea-
 sily lovers or friends do slide into the imitation of
 the persons whom they affect, and how, even before
 they are aware, they begin to resemble them, not on-
 ly in the more considerable instances of their de-
 portment, but also in their voice and gesture, and
 that which we call their mien and air ; and certain-
 ly we should as well transcribe the virtue, and in-
 ward beauties of the Soul, if they were the object &
 motive of our love. But now as all the creatures
 we converse with have their mixture and alloy, we
 are always in hazard to be sullied and corrupted by
 placing our affection on them. Passion doth easily
 blind our eyes, so that we first approve, and then
 imitate the things that are blameable in them: the
 true way to improve and ennoble our Souls is by
 fixing our love on the divine perfections, that we
 may have them always before us, and derive an im-
 pression of them on ourselves, and *beholding with o-
 pen face as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we may be*
changed

*changed into the same image from glory to glory. He who with a generous and holy ambition hath raised his eyes towards that uncreated beauty and goodness, and fixed his affections there, is quite of another spirit, of a more excellent and heroick temper than the rest of the world, and cannot but infinitely disdain all mean and unworthy things; will not entertain any low or base thoughts, which might disparage his high and noble pretensions. Love is the greatest and most excellent thing of which we are masters, and therefore it is folly and baseness to bestow it unworthily; it is, indeed the only thing we can call our own; other things may be taken from us by violence, but none can ravish our love. If any thing else be counted ours, by giving our love we give all, so far as we make over our hearts and wills, by which we possess our other enjoyments. It is not possible to refuse him any thing, to whom by love we have given ourselves; nay since it is the privilege of gifts to receive their value from the mind of the giver, and not to be measured by the events but by the desire; he who loveth may in some sense be said not only to bestow all that he hath, but all things else which may make the beloved person happy, since he doth heartily wish them, and would really give them, if they were in his power; in which sense it is that one makes bold to say, *That divine love doth in a manner give God unto himself* by
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the complacency it takes in the happiness and perfection of his nature: but this may seem too strained an expression; certainly love is the worthiest present we can offer unto God, and it is extremely debased when we bellow it another way.

When this affection is misplaced, it doth often vent itself in such expressions as point at its genuine and proper object, and insinuate where it ought to be placed. The flattering and blasphemous terms of adoration, wherein men do sometimes express their passion, are the language of that affection which was made and designed for God: as he who is accustomed to speak to some great person, doth perhaps unawares accost another with those titles he was wont to give to him. But certainly that passion which accounteth its object a Deity, ought to be bestowed on him who really is so; those unlimited submissions, which would debase the Soul if directed to another, will exalt and ennoble it, when placed here: those chains and cords of love are infinitely more glorious than liberty itself; this slavery is more noble than all the empires in the world.

Sect. 3, Again, as divine love doth advance and elevate the Soul, so it is that alone which can make it happy; the highest and most ravishing pleasures, the most solid and most substantial delights, of which human nature is capable, are those which a-

rife from the endearments of a well-placed and successful affection. That which imbitters love, and makes it ordinarily a very troublesome and hurtful passion, is the placing it on those who have not worth enough to deserve it, or affection and gratitude to requite it, or whose absence may deprive us of the pleasure of their converse, or their miseries occasion our trouble. To all these evils are they exposed, whose chief and supreme affection is placed on creatures like themselves, but the love of God delivers us from them all.

Sect. 4. First I say, love must needs be miserable, and full of trouble and disquietude, when there is not worth and excellency enough in the object to answer the vastness of its capacity: so eager and violent a passion cannot but fret and torment the spirit, when it finds not wherewith to satisfy its cravings. And indeed so large and unbounded is its nature, that it must be extremely pinched and straightened, when confined to any creature: nothing below an infinite God can afford it room to stretch itself, and exert its vigour and activity. What is a little skin-deep beauty or some small degrees of goodness to match or satisfy a passion which was made for God, designed to embrace an infinite Good? No wonder lovers do so hardly suffer any rival, and do not desire that others should approve their passion by imitating of it; they know the scantiness and narrowness of the good which they love, that it cannot

not suffice two, being in effect too little for one. Hence love which is strong as death occasioneth jealousy which is cruel as the grave, the coals whereof, are coals of fire, which hath a most violent flame.

But divine love hath no mixture of this gall ; when once the Soul is fixed on that supream and all-sufficient Good, it finds so much perfection and goodness, as doth not only answer and satisfy its affection, but master and over-power it too : it finds all its love to be too faint and languid for such a noble object, and is only sorry that it can command no more. It wisheth for the flames of a *Seraph*, and longs for the time when it shall be wholly melted and dissolved into love : and because it can do so little itself, it desires the assistance of the whole creation, that angels and men would concur with it in the admiration and love of those infinite perfections.

Sect. 5. Again love is accompanied with trouble when it misseeth a suitable return of affection ; Love is the most valuable thing we can bestow, and by giving it, we do in effect give all that we have ; and therefore it must needs be afflicting to find so great a gift despised, that the present which one hath made of his whole heart, cannot prevail to obtain any return. Perfect love is a kind of self-dereliction, a wandering out of ourselves, it is a kind of voluntary

voluntary death, wherein the lover dies to himself, and all his own interests, not thinking of them nor caring for them any more, and minding nothing but how he may please and gratify the party whom he loves. Thus he is quite undone unless he meets with a return of affection, he neglects himself, and the other hath no regard to him; but if he be beloved, he is revived, as it were, and liveth in the Soul and care of the person whom he loves, and now he begins to mind his own concerns, not so much because they are his, as because the beloved is pleased to own an interest in them: he becomes dear unto himself, because he is so unto the other.

But why should I enlarge in so known a matter, nothing can be more clear than that the happiness of love depends on the return it meets with; and herein he who loveth God hath unspeakably the advantage, having placed his affections on him whose nature is love, whose goodness is as infinite as his Being; whose mercy prevented us when we were his enemies; therefore cannot choose but embrace us, when we are become his friends. It is utterly impossible that God should deny his love to a Soul wholly devoted to him, and which desires nothing so much as to serve and please him: he cannot disdain his own image, nor the heart in which he is engraven: Love is all the tribute which we can pay him,

him, and it is the sacrifice which he will not despise.

Sect. 6. Another thing which disturbs the pleasure of love, and renders it a miserable and unquiet passion, is absence and separation from those we love. It is not without a sensible affliction that friends do part, though for some little time; it is sad to be deprived of that society which is so delightful; our life becomes tedious, being spent in an impatient expectation of the happy hour wherein we may meet again: but if death have made the separation, as some time or other it must, this occasions a grief scarcely to be paralleled by all the misfortunes of human life, and wherein we pay dear enough for the comforts of our friendship. But O how happy are those who have placed their love on him who can never be absent from them! * they need but open their eyes, and they shall every where behold the traces of his presence and glory, and converse with him whom their soul loveth; and this makes the darkest prison, or wildest desert, not only supportable, but delightful to them.

Sect. 7. In fine, a lover is miserable if the person whom he loves be so: They who have made an exchange of hearts by love, get thereby an interest

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est in one anothers happiness and misery ; and this makes love a troublesome passion, when placed on earth. The most fortunate person hath grief enough to marr the tranquillity of his friend, and it is hard to hold out, when we are attacked on all hands, and suffer not only in our own person, but in anothers. But if God were the object of our love, we should share in an infinite happiness without any mixture or possibility of diminution ; we should rejoice to behold the glory of God, and receive comfort and pleasure from all the praises wherewith men and angels do extol him. It should delight us beyond all expression to consider, that the being whom we love is infinitely happy in himself, and that all his enemies cannot shake or unsettle his throne ; *That our God is in the Heavens, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth.*

Behold ! on what sure foundations his happiness is built, whose Soul is possessed with divine love, whose will is transformed into the will of God, and whose greatest desire is that his maker should be pleased : O the peace, the rest, the satisfaction that attendeth such a temper of mind !

Self. 8. What an infinite pleasure must it needs be, thus as it were to loose ourselves in him, and being swallowed up in the over-coming sense of his goodness, to offer ourselves a living sacrifice always ascending

ascending unto him in flames of love. Never doth a Soul know what solid joy and substantial pleasure is till once being weary of itself, it renounce all propriety, give itself up unto the author of its being, and feel itself become a hallowed and devoted thing, and can say from an inward sense and feeling, *My beloved is mine* (I account all his interest mine own) *and I am his*: I am content to be any thing for him, and I care not for myself, but that I may serve him. A person moulded into this temper, would find pleasure in all the dispensations of providence: temporal enjoyments would have another relish, when he should taste the divine goodness in them, and consider them as tokens of love sent by his dearest Lord and Maker: and chastisements, though they be not joyous but grievous would hereby lose their sting, the rod as well as the staff would comfort him: he would snatch a kiss from the hand that was smiting him, and gather sweetness from that severity: nay he would rejoice that though God did not the will of such a worthless and foolish creature as himself, yet he did his own will, and accomplished his own designs which are infinitely more holy and wise.

Sect. 9. The exercises of Religion, which to others are insipid and tedious, do yield the highest pleasure and delight to Souls possessed with divine love: they rejoice when they are called to *go up to the house of the Lord.* that they may see his power and

his

his glory, as they have formerly seen it in his sanctuary. They never think themselves so happy as when, having retired from the world, and gotten free from the noise and hurry of affairs, and silenced all their clamorous passions, (those troublesome guests within) they have placed themselves in the presence of God, and entertain fellowship and communion with him: they delight to adore his perfections, and recount his favours, and to protest their affection to him, and tell him a thousand times that they love him, to lay out their troubles or wants before him, and disburden their hearts in his bosom. Repentance itself is a delightful exercise, when it floweth from the principle of love; there is a secret sweetness which accompanieth those tears of remorse, those meltings and relentings of a Soul returning unto God, and lamenting its former unkindness.

The severities of a holy life, and that constant watch we are obliged to keep over our hearts and ways, are very troublesome to those who are only ruled and acted by an external law, and have no law in their minds inclining them to the performance of their duty; but where divine love possesseth the Soul, it stands as sentinel to keep out every thing that may offend the object of our love, and doth disdainfully repulse those temptations which assault it: it complieth chearfully, not only with explicit

explicit commands, but with the most secret notices of God's pleasure, and is ingenious in discovering what will be most grateful and acceptable unto him: it makes mortification and self-denial change their harsh and dreadful names; and become easy, sweet and delightful things.

But I find this part of my letter swell bigger than I designed, (indeed who would not be tempted to dwell on so pleasant a theme) I shall endeavour to compensate it by brevity in the other points.

Self. 10. The next branch of the divine life is an universal charity and love: The excellency of this grace will be easily acknowledged; for what can be more noble and generous than an heart enlarged to embrace the whole world, whose wishes and designs are levelled at the good and welfare of the universe, which considereth every mans interest as his own? He who loveth his neighbour as himself, can never entertain any base or injurious thought, or be wanting in expressions of bounty; he had rather suffer a thousand wrongs, than be guilty of one; and never accounts himself happy, but when some one or other hath been benefited by him: the malice or ingratitude of men is not able to resist his love; he overlooks their injuries, and pities their folly, and overcomes their evil with good, and never designs any other revenge against his most bitter and malicious enemies, than to put all the obligations

gations he can upon them, whether they will or not. Is it any wonder that such a person be revered and admired, and accounted the darling of mankind? This inward goodness and benignity of spirit reflects a certain sweetness and serenity upon the very countenance, and makes it amiable and lovely: it inspireth the Soul with a noble resolution and courage, and makes it capable of enterprizing and effecting the highest things. Those heroick actions which we are wont to read with admiration, have for the most part been the effects of the love of ones country, or of particular friendships; and certainly a more extensive and universal affection, must be much more powerful and efficacious.

Sect. 11. Again, as *charity* flows from a noble and excellent temper, so it is accompanied with the greatest satisfaction and pleasure: it delights the Soul to feel itself thus enlarged, and to be delivered from those disquieting as well as deformed passions, malice, hatred and envy: and become gentle, sweet and benign. Had I my choice of all things that might tend to my present felicity, I would pitch upon this, to have my heart possessed with the greatest kindness and affection towards all men in the world. I am sure this would make me partake in all the happiness of others, their inward endowments and outward prosperity, every thing that did yield them benefit and advantage, would afford me comfort

comfort and pleasure: and though I should frequently meet with occasions of grief and compassion, yet there is a sweetness in commiseration which makes it infinitely more desirable than a stupid insensibility: and the consideration of that infinite goodness and wisdom which governs the world, might represent any excessive trouble for particular calamities that happened in it: and the hope, or possibility of mens after-happiness, might moderate their sorrow for present misfortunes. Certainly next to the love and enjoyment of God, that ardent charity and affection wherewith blessed Souls do embrace one another, is justly to be reckoned as the greatest felicity of those regions above, and did it universally prevail in the world, it would anticipate that blessedness and make us taste of the Joys of Heaven upon earth.

Sect. 12. That which I named as a third branch of Religion was *Purity*, and you may remember I described it to consist in a contempt of sensual pleasures, and resoluteness to undergo those troubles and pains we may meet with in the performance of our duty: now the naming of this may suffice to recommend it as a most noble and excellent quality. There is no slavery so base as that whereby a man becomes a drudge to his own lusts: nor any victory so glorious as that which is obtained over them. Never can any person be capable of any thing that is noble and worthy, who is sunk in the gross and muddy

muddy pleasures of sense, or bewitched with the light and airy gratifications of fancy ; but the religious Soul is of a more sublime and divine temper, it knows it was made for higher things, and scorns to step aside one foot out of the ways of holiness, for the obtaining any of these.

Secl. 13. And this purity is accompanied with a great deal of pleasure, whatsoever defiles the Soul disturbs it too ; all impure delights have a sting in them, and leave smart and trouble behind them. Excess and intemperance, and all inordinate lusts, are so much enemies to the health of the body, and the interest of the present life, that a little consideration might oblige any rational man to forbear them on that very score : And if the religious person go higher, and do not only abstain from noxious pleasures, but neglect those that are innocent, this is not to be looked upon as any violent and uneasy restraint, but as the effect of better choice ; that their minds are taken up in the pursuit of more sublime and refined delights, so that they cannot be concerned in these. Any person that is engaged in a violent and passionate affection, will easily forget his ordinary gratifications, will be little curious about his diet, or his bodily ease, or the diversions in which he was wonted to delight. No wonder then if Souls overpowered with divine love, despise inferior pleasures, and be almost ready to grudge the body its necessary

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neccessary attendance for the common accommodati-
ons of life, judging all these impertinent to the
main happiness, and those higher enjoyments they
are pursuing. As for the hardships they meet with
they rejoice in them, as opportunities to exercise and
testify their affection : and since they are able to do
so little for God, they are glad of the honour to suf-
fer for him.

Seet. 14. The last branch of Religion is *Humil-
ity* : and however to vulgar and carnal eyes this
may appear an abject, base and despicable quality.
yet really the Soul of a man is not capable of au-
higher and more noble endowment, It is a silly ig-
norance that begets pride, but humility arises from
a nearer acquaintance with excellent things, which
keeps men from doating on trifles, or admiring
themselves because of some petty attainments. No-
ble and well educated Souls have no such high opi-
nion of riches, beauty, strength and other such like
advantages, as to value themselves for them, or de-
spise those that want them : and as for inward worth
and real goodnets, the sense they have of the divine
perfections, makes them think very meanly of any
thing they have hitherto attained, and be still endea-
vouring to surmount themselves, and make nearer
approaches to those infinite excellences which they
admire.

I know not what thoughts people may have of
humility,

but I see almost every person pretending to it, and shunning such expressions and actions as may make them be accounted arrogant and presumptuous, so that those who are most desirous of praise, will be loath to commend themselves. What are those compliments and modes of civility, so frequent in our ordinary converse, but so many protestations of our esteem of others, and the low thoughts we have of ourselves? And must not that humility be a noble and excellent endowment, when the very shadows of it are accounted so necessary a part of good breeding.

Señ. 15. Again, this grace is accompanied with a great deal of happiness and tranquillity: the proud and arrogant person is a trouble to all that converse with him, but most of all unto himself: every thing is enough to vex him but scarcely any thing is enough to content and please him. He is ready to quarrel with every thing that falls out, as if he himself was such a considerable person, that God Almighty should do every thing to gratify him, and all the creatures of heaven and earth should wait on him and obey his will. The leaves of high trees do shake with every blast of wind, and every breath, every evil word will disquiet and torment an arrogant man: but the humble person hath the advantage when he is despised, that none can think more meanly of him than he doth of himself

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self, and therefore he is not troubled at the matter, but can easily bear those reproaches which wound the other to the Soul. And withal as he is less affected with injuries, so indeed he is less obnoxious unto them: *Contention which cometh of pride* betrays a man into a thousand inconveniences, which those of a meek and lowly temper seldom meet with. True genuine humility begetteth both a veneration and love among all wise and discerning persons, while pride defeateth its own design, and depriveth a man of that honour it makes him pretend to.

But as the chief exercises of humility are those which relate to Almighty God, so these are accompanied with the greatest satisfaction and sweetness. It is impossible to express the great pleasure and delight which religious persons feel in the lowest prostrations of their Soul before God, when having a deep sense of the divine Majesty and Glory, they sink (if I may so speak) to the bottom of their beings, and vanish and disappear in the presence of God, by a serious and affectionate acknowledgement of their own nothingness, and the shortness and imperfections of their attainments; when they understand the full sense and emphasis of the psalmist's exclamation, *Lord, what is man?* and can utter it with the same affection. Never did any haughty and ambitious person receive the praises and applauses of men with so much pleasure, as the humble
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thy infinite blessedness and glory, by loving thee and
 rejoicing in them? O the happiness of those Souls
 that have broken the fetters of self-love, and dis-
 tangled their affection from every narrow and particu-
 lar good, whose understandings are enlightened by thy
 holy Spirit, and their wills enlarged to the extent of
 thine; who love thee above all things, and all man-
 kind for thy sake! I am persuaded O God, I am per-
 suaded, that I can never be happy, till my carnal and
 corrupt affections be mortified, and my pride and va-
 nity be subdued, and till I come seriously to despise the
 world, and think nothing of myself. But O when
 shall it once be? O when wilt thou come to me and
 satisfy my Soul with thy likeness, making me holy as
 thou art holy, even in all manner of conversation?
 Hast thou given me a prospect of so great a felicity,
 and wilt thou not bring me unto it? Hast thou ex-
 cited these desires in my Soul, and wilt thou not also
 satisfy them? O teach me to do thy will, for thou
 art my God, thy spirit is good, lead me unto the land
 of uprightness. Quicken me O Lord, for thy name's
 sake, and perfect that which concerneth me: Thy
 mercy O Lord, endureth for ever, forsake not the work
 of thine own hands.

CHAPTER. III.

The Means of forming a Religious Temper and Character.

- Sect. 1. The despondent thoughts which may arise in such as are awakened to a sense of Religion. Sect. 2. The Unreasonableness of such Fears shown. Sect. 3. A general remedy for them suggested; viz. the use of our utmost endeavours in reliance on divine assistance. Sect. 4. More particular directions proposed: As, Sect. 5. (1) To shun all manner of Sin. Sect. 6. (2) With this view to learn what things are sinful. Sect. 7. (3) To resist the Temptations to Sin. Sect. 8. (4) To keep a constant watch over ourselves. Sect. 9. (5) Frequently to examine ourselves. Sect. 10. (6) To restrain ourselves in many things lawful. Sect. 11. (7) To wean our affections from the world, Sect. 12. (8) Conscientiously to perform the outward Acts of Religion. Sect. 13. (9) To form internal Acts of Devotion, &c. A Prayer.*

Sect. 1. **I** Have hitherto considered wherein true Religion doth consist, and how desirable a thing it is; but when one sees how infinitely distant the common temper and frame of men is from it, he may perhaps be ready to despond, and give over and think it utterly impossible to be attain-
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ed : he may sit down in sadness and bemoan himself, and say in the anguish and bitterness of his spirit, "They are happy indeed whose Souls are awakened unto the divine life, who are thus renewed in the spirit of their minds; but alas ! I am quite of another constitution, and am not able to effect so mighty a change : if outward observations could have done the business, I might have hoped to acquit myself with diligence and care ; but since nothing but a new nature can serve the turn, what am I able to do? I could bestow all my goods in offerings to God, or alms to the poor, but cannot command that love and charity, without which this expence would profit me nothing. This gift of God cannot be purchased with money ; if a man should give all the substance of his house for love: it would utterly be condemned : I could pine and macerate my body, and undergo many hardships and troubles but I cannot get all my vices subdued, nor my affections wholly weaned from earthly things : there is still some wordly desires lurking in my heart, and those vanities that I have shut out of the doors, are always getting in at the windows. I am many times convinced of my own meanness, of the weakness of my body, and far greater weakness of my Soul; but this doth rather beget indignation and discontent, than true humility in my spirit : and though I should come to think meanly of myself, yet

yet I cannot endure that others should think so too. In a word, when I reflect on the highest and most specious attainments, I have reason to suspect they are all but the effects of nature, the issues of self-love acting under several disguises; and this principle is so powerful and so deeply rooted in me that I can never hope to be delivered from the dominion of it. I may toss and turn as a door on the hinges, but can never get clear off and be quite unhinged of *Self*, which is still the center of all my motions. So that all the advantage I can draw from the discovery of Religion, is but to see at a huge distance that felicity which I am not able to reach; like a man in a shipwreck, who discerns the land, and envies the happiness of those who are there but thinks it impossible for himself to get a shore.

Self. 2. These I say, or such like desponding thoughts may arise in the minds of those persons who begin to conceive somewhat more of the nature and excellency of Religion than before: they have spied the land, and seen that it is exceedingly good, and it floweth with milk and honey; but they have the children of *Anah* to grapple with, many powerful lusts and corruptions to overcome, and they fear they shall never prevail against them. But why should we give way to such discouraging suggestions? why should we entertain such unreasonable fears, which damp our spirits and weaken

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our hands, and augment the difficulties of our way? Let us encourage our selves my dear friend, let us encourage ourselves with those mighty aids we are to expect in this spiritual warfare, for greater is he that is for us, than all that can rise up against us; *The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Let us be strong in the Lord, and the power of his might, for he it is that shall tread down our enemies:* God hath a tender regard unto the Souls of men, and is infinitely willing to promote their welfare: he hath condescended to our weakness, and declared with an oath that he hath no pleasure in our destruction. There is no such thing as despight or envy lodged in the bosom of that ever blessed Being whose name and nature is love. He created us at first in an happy condition; and now when we are fallen from it he hath laid help upon one that is mighty to save, hath committed the care of our Souls to no meaner person than his well beloved Son. It is he that is the captain of our salvation and what enemies can be too strong for us, when we are fighting under his banners? Did not God so love the world as to send his only begotten Son into the world, that he might recover and propagate the divine life and restore the image of God in our Souls. All the mighty works which he performed, all the sad afflictions which he sustained had
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this for their scope and design, for this did he labour and toil, and for this did he bleed and die: *He was with child, he was in pain, and hath he brought forth nothing but wind, hath he wrought no deliverance in the earth? Shall he not see of the travail of his Soul?* Certainly it is impossible that this great contrivance of heaven should prove abortive, that such a mighty undertaking should fail and miscarry: it hath already been effectual for the salvation of many thousands who were once as far from the kingdom of heaven as we can suppose ourselves to be, and our High Priest continueth for ever, and is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him: He is tender and compassionate, he knoweth our infirmities, and had experience of our temptations, *A brused reed will he not break, and smoking flax will he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.* He hath given to us the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, to quicken and revive the Souls of men, and to awaken them to a sense and feeling of those divine things for which they were made. He hath assured us that God our heavenly Father, is willing to give his spirit to them that ask for it, to assist such weak and languishing creatures as we are, in our essays towards holiness and felicity: when once it hath taken hold of a Soul
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and kindled in it the smallest spark of divine love, it will be sure to preserve and cherish and bring it forth into a flame, which many waters shall not quench, neither shall the floods be able to drown it. Whenever this day begins to dawn, and the *day-star* to arise in the heart, it will easily dispel the powers of darkness, and make ignorance and folly and all the corrupt and selfish affections of men flee away as fast before it as the shades of night when the sun cometh out of his chambers: for the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day: They shall go on from strength to strength, till every one of them appear before God in Sion.

Why should we think it impossible that true goodness and universal love should ever come to sway and prevail in our Souls? Is not this their primitive state and condition, their native and genuine constitution as they came first from the hands of their maker? Sin and corruption are but usurpers, and though they have long kept the possession, yet from the beginning it was not so. That inordinate self-love which one would think were rooted in our very being, and interwoven with the constitution of our nature, is nevertheless of foreign extraction. and had no place at all in the state of integrity. We have

have still so much reason left as to condemn it; our understandings are easily convinced that we ought to be wholly devoted to him from whom we have our being, and to love him infinitely more than our selves; who is infinitely better than we; and our wills would readily comply with this, if they were not disordered and put out of tune: and is not he who made our Souls, able to rectify and mend them again? Shall we not be able by his assistance to vanquish and expell those violent intruders, and *turn unto flight the armies of the aliens?*

No sooner shall we take up arms in this holy war, but we shall have all the Saints on earth and all the Angels in heaven engaged on our party: the holy Church throughout the world is daily interceding with God for the success of all such endeavours, and doubtless those heavenly host above are nearly concerned in the interest of Religion, and infinitely desirous to see the divine life thriving and prevailing in this inferior world; and that the will of God be done by us on earth, as it is done by themselves in Heaven: and may we not then encourage ourselves as the prophet did his servant, when he shewed him the horses and chariots of fire, *Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be against us,*

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Self. 3. Away then with all perplexing fears and desponding thoughts: to undertake vigorously, and rely confidently on the divine assistance is more than half the conquest; *Let us arise and be doing, and the Lord will be with us.* It is true, Religion in the Souls of men is the good work of God, and all our natural endeavours alone can never produce it, nor strictly speaking merit those supernatural aids by which it must be wrought, to use here the language spoken on a different occasion: The holy Ghost must come upon us, and the power of the highest must overshadow us, before that holy thing can be begotten, and Christ be formed in us. But yet we must not expect that this whole work should be done without any concurring endeavours of our own: we must not lie loitering in the ditch, and wait till Omnipotence pulls us from thence: no, no, we must bestir ourselves, and actuate those powers which we have already received: We must put forth ourselves to our utmost capacities, and then we may hope that *our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* All the art and industry of man cannot form the smallest herb, or make a stalk of corn to grow in the field; it is the energy of nature, and the influences of heaven which produce this effect: it is *God who causeth the grass to grow, and herb for the service of man;* and yet no body will say that the labours

labours of the husbandman are useless or unnecessary. So likewise the human Soul is immediately created by God; it is he who both formeth and enliveneth the child, and yet he hath appointed the marriage-bed as the ordinary mean for the propagation of mankind. Though God, from his good pleasure, must work in us to will and to do; yet we must work out our own salvation: we must break up our fallow ground, and root out the weeds and pull up the thorns, that so we may be more ready to receive the seeds of grace and dew of heaven. It is true, God hath been found of some who sought him not; he hath cast himself in their way who were quite out of his, he hath laid hold of them, and stopt their course on a sudden; for so was *St. Paul* converted in his journey to *Damascus*. But certainly this is not God's ordinary method of dealing with men, though he hath not tied himself to means, yet he hath tied us to the use of them; and we have never more reason to expect the divine assistance, than when we are doing our utmost endeavours.

Secl. 4. It shall therefore be my next work to shew what course we ought to take for attaining this blessed temper I have hitherto described. But here, if in delivering my own thoughts, I shall chance

chance to differ from what is or may be said by others in this matter, I would not be thought to contradict and oppose them, more than physicians do when they prescribe several remedies for the same disease, which perhaps are all useful and good. Every one may propose the method he judges most proper and convenient, but he doth not thereby pretend that the cure can never be effected unless that be exactly observed. I doubt it hath occasioned much unnecessary inquietude to some holy persons, that they have not found such a regular and orderly transaction in their Souls; as they have seen described in books; that they have not passed through all those steps and stages of conversion, which some (who perhaps have felt them in themselves) have too peremptorily described unto others; God hath several ways of dealing with the Souls of men, and it sufficeth if the work be accomplished, whatever the methods have been.

Again, though in proposing directions, I must follow that order to which the nature of things shall lead; yet I do not mean that the same method should be so punctually observed in the practice; as if the latter rules were never to be heeded till some considerable time have been spent in practising the former: The directions I intend are mutually conducive one to another, and are all to be performed as occasion shall serve, and we find ourselves enabled to perform them.

Seet. 5. But now that I may detain you no longer, if we desire to have our Souls moulded to this holy frame, to become partakers of the divine nature, and have Christ formed in our hearts, we must seriously resolve and carefully endeavour to avoid and abandon all vicious and sinful practices. There can be no treaty of peace, till once we lay down these weapons of rebellion wherewith we fight against heaven: nor can we expect to have our distemper cured, if we be daily feeding on poison. Every wilful sin gives a mortal wound to the Soul, and puts it at a greater distance from God & goodness; and we can never hope to have our hearts purified from corrupt affections, unless we cleanse our hands from vicious actions. Now in this case we cannot excuse ourselves by the pretence of impossibility: for sure our outward man is some way in our power, we have some command of our feet and hands and tongue, nay and of our thoughts and fancies too, at least so far as to divert them from impure and sinful objects; and to turn our mind another way; and we should find this power and authority much strengthened and advanced, if we were careful to manage and exercise it. In the mean while I acknowledge our corruptions are so strong, and our temptations so many, that it will require a great deal of steadfastness and resolution, of watchfulness and care, to preserve ourselves, even in this degree of innocence and purity.

Señ. 6. And first let us inform ourselves well, what these sins are from which we ought to abstain. And here we must not take our measures from the maxims of the world, or the practises of those whom in charity we account good men. Most people have very light apprehensions of these things, and are not sensible of any fault unless it be gross and flagitious, and scarcely reckon any so great as that which they call preciseness: and those who are more serious, do many times allow themselves to great latitude and freedom. Alas! how much pride and vanity, and passion and humour, how much weakness folly and sin, doth every day show itself in their converse and behaviour? It may be they are humbled for it, and are daily gaining some ground; but then the progress is so small, and their failings so many, that we had need to choose an exacter pattern. Every one of us must answer for himself, and the practises of others will never warrant and secure us. It is the highest folly to regulate our actions by any other standard, than that by which they must be judged. If ever we would *cleanse our way*, it must be by taking heed thereto according to the word of God: and that word which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and

and intents of the heart, will certainly discover many things to be sinful and heinous, which pass for very innocent in the eyes of the world : Let us therefore imitate the psalmist, who saith, *Concerning the works of men, by the words of thy lips, I have kept my self from the path of the destroyer.* Let us acquaint ourselves well with the strict and holy laws of our Religion : Let us consider the discourses of our blessed Saviour, (especially that divine sermon on the mount) and the writings of the holy Apostles, where an ingenuous and unbiaſſed mind may clearly discern those limits and bounds by which our actions ought to be confined. And then let us never look upon any sin as light and inconsiderable ; but be fully persuaded, that the smallest is infinitely heinous in the sight of God, and prejudicial to the Souls of men ; and if we had the right sense of things, we should be deeply affected with the least irregularities ; as now we are with the greatest crimes.

Señ. 7. But now among those things which we discover to be sinful, there will be some, unto which through the disposition of our nature, or long custom, or the endearments of pleasure, we are so much wedded, that it will be like cutting of the right hand, or pulling out the right eye to abandon them.

But

But must we therefore sit down and wait till all difficulties be over, and every temptation be gone? this were to imitate the fool in the poet.* who stood the whole day at the river side, till all the water should run by. We must not indulge our inclinations, as we do little children, till they grow weary of the thing they are unwilling to let go: We must not continue our sinful practices in hopes that the divine grace will one day over-power our spirits and make us hate them for their own deformity.

Let us suppose the worst, that we are utterly destitute of any supernatural principle, and want that taste by which we should discern and abhor perverse things; yet, surely we are capable of some considerations which may be of force to persuade us to this reformation of our lives. If the inward deformity and heinous nature of sin cannot affect us, at least we may be frightened by those dreadful consequences that attend it: That same selfish principle which pusheth us forward unto the pursuit of sinful pleasures, will make us loath to buy them at the rate of everlasting destruction, Thus we may encounter self-love with its own weapons and employ our natural inclination for repressing the exorbitancies of another, Let us therefore accustom ourselves to consider seriously what a fearful thing

* HORACE a Roman Poet, E.

thing it must needs be to irritate and offend that infinite Being on whom we hang and depend every moment, who needs but to withdraw his mercies to make us miserable, or his assistance to make us nothing. Let us frequently remember the shortness and uncertainty of our lives, and how that after we have taken a few turns more in the world, and conversed a little more amongst men, we must all go down unto the dark and silent grave, and carry nothing along with us but anguish and regret for all our sinful enjoyments, and think what horror must needs seize the guilty Soul, to find itself naked and all alone before the severe and impartial judge of the world, to render an exact account not only of its more important and considerable transactions, but of every word that the tongue hath uttered, and the swiftest and most secret thought that ever passed through the mind. Let us sometimes represent unto ourselves the terrors of that dreadful day, when the foundation of the earth shall be shaken, and the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the element shall melt with fervent heat, and the present frame of nature shall be dissolved, and our eyes shall see the blessed Jesus (who came once into the world in all humility to visit us, and beseech us to accept of it) now appearing in the Majesty

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of his glory, and descending from heaven in a flaming fire to take vengeance on those that have despised his mercy, and persisted in rebellion against him: when all the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the counsels of the heart shall be made manifest: when those secret impurities and subtle frauds whereof the world did never suspect us, shall be exposed and laid open to publick view, and many thousand actions which we never dreamed to be sinful, or else had altogether forgotten, shall be charged home upon our consciences with such evident convictions of guilt, that we shall neither be able to deny or excuse them. Then shall all the Angels in heaven, and all the Saints that ever lived on the earth, approve that dreadful sentence which shall be passed on wicked men, and those who perhaps did love and esteem them when they lived in the world, shall look upon them with indignation and abhorrence, and never make one request for their deliverance. Let us consider the eternal punishment of impenitent Souls, which are shadowed forth in scripture by metaphors taken from those things which are most terrible and grievous in the world, and yet all do not suffice to convey unto our minds any full apprehensions of them. When we have joined together the importance of all the expressions, and added unto them whatever our fancy

fancy can conceive of misery and torment, we must remember that all this comes infinitely short of the truth and reality of the thing.

It's true, this is a sad and melancholy subject, there is anguish and horror in the consideration of it; but sure it must be infinitely more dreadful to endure it; and such thoughts as these may be useful to fright us from the courses that would lead us thither; how fond soever we may be of sinful pleasures, the fear of hell would make us abstain: our most forward inclinations will startle and give back; when pressed with that question in the prophet, *Who amongst you can dwell with everlasting burnings.*

To this very purpose it is that the terrors of another world are so frequently represented in holy writ, and that in such terms as are most proper to affect and influence a carnal mind: These fears can never suffice to make any person truly good; but certainly they may serve to restrain us from much evil, and have often made way for more ingenuous and kindly impressions.

See. 8 But it will not suffice to consider these things once and again, nor to form some resolutions of abandoning our sins, unless we maintain a constant guard, and be continually watching against them

them. Sometimes the mind is awakened to see the dismal consequences of a vicious life, and straightly we are resolved to reform: but alas! it presently falleth asleep, and we lose that prospect which we had of things, and then temptations take the advantage: they solicit and importune us continually, and so do frequently engage our consent before we are aware. It is the folly and ruin of most people to live at adventure, and take part in every thing that comes in their way, seldom considering what they are about to say or do. If we would have our resolutions take effect, we must take heed unto our ways, and set a watch upon the door of our lips, and examine the motions that arise in our hearts, and cause them to tell us whence they come, and whither they go; whether it be pride or passion, or any corrupt and vicious humour that prompteth us to any design, and whether God will be offended, or any body harmed by it. And if we have no time for long reasonings, let us at least turn our eyes towards God, and place ourselves in his presence, to ask his leave and approbation for what we do: Let us consider ourselves under the all-seeing eye of that divine Majesty, as in the midst of an infinite globe of light, which compasseth us about both behind and before, and pierceth to the very innermost corners of the Soul. The sense and remembrance of the divine presence, is the most ready and effectual means, both to discover what is un-

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lawful, and to restrain us from it. There are some things a person may make a shift to palliate or defend, yet he dares not look Almighty God in the face and adventure upon them. If we look unto him we shall be enlightned; if we set him always before us, he will guide us by his eye, and instruct us in the way wherein we ought to walk.

Seet. 9. This care and watchfulness over our actions must be seconded, by frequent and serious reflexions upon them, not only that we may obtain the divine mercy and pardon for our sins by an humble and sorrowful acknowledgment of them; but also that we may reinforce and strengthen our resolutions, and learn to decline and resist the temptations by which we have been formerly foiled. It is an advice worthy of a Christian, though it did first drop from an Heathen pen; * that before we betake ourselves to rest, we renew and examine all the passages of the day, that we may have the comfort of what we have done aright, and redress what we find to have been amiss, and make the shipwrecks of one day as marks to direct our course in another. This may be called the very art of virtuous living, and would contribute wonderfully to advance our reformation, and preserve our innocency. But with-

* PYTHAGORAS, a celebrated Philosopher of Greece, who died in the year 497 before Christ. E.

al we must not forget to implore the divine assistance, especially against those sins which do most easily beset us: and though it be supposed that our hearts are not yet moulded into that spiritual frame which should render our devotions acceptable, yet methinks such considerations as have been proposed to deter us from sin, may also stir us up to some natural seriousness, and make our prayers against it as earnest at least, as they are wont to be against other calamities: and I doubt not but God who heareth the cry of the ravens, will have some regard even to such petitions as proceed from those natural passions which himself implanted in us. Besides that those prayers against sin will be powerful engagements on ourselves to excite us to watchfulness and care; and common ingenuity will make us ashamed to relapse into those faults, which we have lately bewailed before God, and against which we have begged his assistance.

Secl. 10. Thus are we to make the first essay for recovering the divine life, by restraining the natural inclinations, that they break not out into sinful practices: but now I must add, that christian prudence will teach us to abstain from gratifications that are not unlawful in themselves, and that not only that we may secure our innocence, which would be in continual hazard, if we should strain our liberty to the utmost point: but also that hereby we may weaken the forces of nature, and teach our appetites

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appetites to obey. We must do with ourselves as prudent parents with their children, who cross their wills in many little indifferent things, to make them manageable and submissive in more considerable instances. He who would mortify the pride & vanity of the spirit, should stop his ears to the most deserved praises, and sometimes forbear his just vindication from the censures and aspersions of others, especially if they reflect only upon his prudence and conduct, and not on his virtue and innocence. He who would check a revengeful humour, would do well to deny himself the satisfaction of representing unto others the injuries which he hath sustained; and if we would so take heed to our ways, that we sin not with our tongue, we must accustom ourselves much to solitude and silence, and sometimes with the psalmist *Hold our peace even from good*, till once we have gotten some command over that unruly member. Thus, I say, we may bind up our natural inclinations, and make our appetites more moderate in their cravings, by accustoming them to frequent refusals: But it is not enough to have them under violence and restraint.

Sec. 11. Our next essay must be to wean our affections from created things, and all the delights and entertainments of the lower life, which sink and depress the Souls of men, and retard their motions towards God and Heaven: And this we must do
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by possessing our minds with a deep persuasion of the vanity and emptiness of worldly enjoyments. This is an ordinary theme, and every body can make declamations upon it; but alas! how few understand and believe what they say? These notions float in our brains, and come sliding off our tongues, but we have no deep impression of them on our spirits, we feel not the truth we pretend to believe. We can tell that all the glory and splendour, all the pleasures and enjoyments of the world, are vanity and nothing, and yet these nothings take up all our thoughts, and engross all our affections, they stifle the better inclinations of our Soul, and inveigle us into many a sin. It may be in a sober mood, we give them the slight, and resolve to be no longer deluded with them; but these thoughts seldom out-live the next temptation, the vanities which we shut out at the doors get in at a postern: there are still some pretensions, some hopes that flatter us, and after we have been frustrated a thousand times, we must continually be repeating the experiment: The least difference of circumstances is enough to delude us, and make us expect that satisfaction in one thing, which we have missed in another: but could we once get clearly off, and come to a real and serious contempt of worldly things, this were a very considerable advancement in our way. The Soul of man is of a vigorous and active nature, and hath in it a raging and unextinguishable thirst,

thirst, an immaterial kind of fire, always catching at some object or other, in conjunction wherewith it thinks to be happy; and were it once rent from the world, and all the bewitching enjoyments under the sun, it would quickly search after some higher and more excellent object, to satisfy its ardent and importunate cravings, and being no longer dazzled with glittering vanities, would fix on that supream and all-sufficient Good, where it would discover such beauty and sweetness as would charm and overpower all its affections. The love of the world & the love of God, are like the scales of a balance, as the one falleth the other doth rise: when our natural inclinations prosper, and the creature is exalted in our Soul, Religion is faint, and doth languish: but when earthly objects wither away, and lose their beauty, and the Soul begins to cool and flagg in its prosecution of them, then the seeds of grace take root, and the divine life begins to flourish and prevail. It doth therefore nearly concern us to convince ourselves of the emptiness and vanity of creature enjoyments, and reason our hearts out of love with them: let us seriously consider all that our reason, or our faith, our own experience, or the observation of others can suggest to this effect; let us ponder the matter over and over, and fix our thoughts on this truth, till we become really persuaded of it. Amidst all our pursuits and designs let us stop and ask ourselves, for what end is all this? At what

what do I aim? Can the gross and muddy pleasures of sense, or a heap of white and yellow earth, or the esteem and affection of silly creatures like myself, satisfy any rational and immortal powers? Have I not tried these things already? Will they have a higher relish, and yield me more contentment to-morrow than yesterday, or the next year than they did the last? There may be some little difference betwixt that which I am now pursuing, and that which I enjoyed before; but sure my former enjoyments did shew as pleasant, and promise as fair before I attained them: like the rain-bow they look very glorious at a distance, but when I approached, I found nothing but emptiness and vapour. O what a poor thing would the life of man be, if it were capable of no higher enjoyments!

I cannot insist on this subject, and there is the less need when I remember to whom I am writing. Yes (my dear friend) you have had as great experience of the emptiness and vanity of human things, and have at present as few wordly engagements as any that I know. I have sometimes reflected on those passages of your life wherewith you have been pleased to acquaint me; and methinks through all I can discern a design of the divine providence to wean your affections from every thing here below. The trials you have had of those things upon which the world doats, have taught you to despise them, and you have found by experience that neither the

endow-

endowments of nature, nor the advantages of fortune are sufficient for happiness: that every rose hath its thorn, and there may be a worm at the root of the fairest gourd, some secret and undiscerned grief which may make a person deserve the pity of those who perhaps do admire or envy their supposed felicity. If earthly comforts have got too much of your heart, I think they have been your relations and friends, and the dearest of these are removed out of the world, so that you must raise your mind towards Heaven, when you would think upon them. Thus God hath provided that your heart be loosed from the world, and that he may not have any rival in your affection, which I have always observed to be so large and unbounded, so noble and disinterested, that no inferiour object can answer or deserve it.

Seet, 12. When we have got our corruptions restrained, and our natural appetites and inclinations towards wordly things in some measure subdued, we must proceed to such exercises as have a more immediate tendency to excite and awaken our divine life: And first let us endeavour conscientiously to perform those duties which Religion doth require, and whereunto it would incline us if it did prevail in our Souls. If we cannot get our inward disposition presently changed, let us study at least to regulate our outward deportment: if our hearts be not yet inflamed with divine love, let us however

own our allegiance to that infinite Majesty, by attending to his service, and listening to his word, by speaking reverently of his name, and praising his goodness, and exhorting others to serve and obey him, If we want that charity and those bowels of compassion which we ought to have towards our neighbours, yet we must not omit any occasion of doing them good: If our hearts be haughty and proud, we must nevertheless study a modest and humble deportment. These external performances are of little value in themselves, yet they may help us forward to better things: The Apostle indeed telleth us, *that bodily exercise profiteth little*; but he seemeth not to affirm that it is altogether useless; it is always good to be doing what we can, for then God is wont to pity our weakness, and assist our feeble endeavours: and when true charity and humility and other graces of the divine spirit comes to take root in our Souls, they will exert themselves more freely and with the less difficulty, if we have before been accustomed to express them in our outward conversation. Nor need we fear the imputation of hypocrisy, tho' our actions do thus somewhat out-run our affections, seeing they do still proceed from a sense of our duty, and our design is not to appear better than we are, but that we may really become so.

Sect. 13. But as inward acts have a more immediate influence on the Soul, to mould it to a right temper and frame, so ought we to be most frequent

frequent and sedulous in the exercise of them. Let us be often lifting up our hearts towards God; and if we do not say that we love him above all things, let us at least acknowledge that it is our duty and would be our happiness so to do: Let us lament the dishonour done unto him by foolish and sinful men, and applaud the adorations that are given him by that blessed and glorious company above: Let us resign and yield ourselves up unto him a thousand times to be governed by his laws, and disposed of at his pleasure; and though our stubborn hearts should start back and refuse, yet let us contest before him we are convinced his will is always just and good and therefore desire him to do with us whatsoever he pleaseth whether we will or not. And so, for begetting in us an universal charity towards men, we must be frequently putting up wishes for their happiness and blessing every person that we see; and when we have done any thing for the relief of the miserable, we may second it with earnest desires that God would take care of them and deliver them out of all their distresses.

Thus should we exercise ourselves unto godliness, and when we are employing the powers that we have, the spirit of God is wont to strike in, and elevate these acts of our Soul beyond the pitch of nature, and give them a divine impression; and after the frequent repetition of these we shall find ourselves more inclined unto them, they flowing with greater freedom and ease.

A PRAYER.

BLESSED be thy name O God of all grace, that thou hast called us to virtue and glory. Blessed be thy name, that thou hast not left us without divine instruction to direct, nor without powerful helps to assist our pursuit of these heavenly blessings. Through the energy of thy word and spirit I can do all things. I humbly seek thy aid, and shall I seek it in vain? Give me understanding and resolution to avoid all appearance of evil. Shew me my duty and teach me to discern the things that are excellent, Fix in my mind a deep and serious sense of the evil and danger of transgressing thy holy law. Beget in me holy fear and form me to an humble, watchful and cautious conduct. Suffer me not to fall into a fatal ignorance of my own temper and character: search me and try me and see if there be any evil way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Grant me an habitual self-command and a serious composure and steadiness of mind: that temptations to sin may not prevail over me; nor lawless enjoyments betray me into evil. Assist me to be moderate in all things: raise my heart above this world; and possess my breast with all devout, kind and heavenly affections. Teach me thy statutes; enlarge my heart to know the way of thy commandments; and improve every outward act of Religion and charity into settled habits of love and piety. Smile, gracious

cious God, on my endeavours to work out my salvation : that the fruit of all may be unto holiness and the end everlasting life through Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER IV,

Means of forming a Religious Temper and Character.

I. Sect. 1 Consideration recommended as an Instrument of Religion. For instance Sect. 2 (1) Meditation on the Excellencies of the divine nature. Sect. 3 (2) On God's goodness and love. Sect. 4 (3) On the common Relation all men bear to God, and their participation of his image. Sect. 5 (4) On the dignity of our nature. Sect. 6 (5) On the joys of heaven. Sect. 7 (6) On our own failings compared with the divine excellencies. II Sect. 8 Prayers particularly mental. III. Sect. 9. A frequent tendance on the Lord's Supper. A Prayer.

Sect. 1 I shall mention but three other means for begetting that holy and divine temper of spirit, which is the subject of the present discourse: And the first is a deep and serious consideration of the truths of our Religion, and that both as to the certainty and impor-

importance of them. The assent which is ordinarily given to divine truths is very faint and languid, very weak and ineffectual, flowing only from a blind inclination to follow that Religion which is in fashion, or a lazy indifference and unconcernedness whether things be so or not. Men are unwilling to quarrel with the Religion of their country, and since all their neighbours are christians, they are content to be so too ; but they are seldom at the pains to consider the evidences of those truths, or to ponder the importance and tendency of them : and thence it is that they have so little influence on their affections and practise. Those *spiritless and paralitick thoughts*, (as one doth rightly term them) are not able to move the will, and direct the hand. We must therefore endeavour to work up our minds to a serious belief and full persuasion of divine truths unto a sense and feeling of spiritual things : Our thoughts must dwell upon them till we be both convinced of them, and deeply affected with them. Let us urge forward our spirits, and make them approach the invisible world, and fix our minds upon heavenly things, till we clearly perceive that these are no dreams, nay that all things are dreams and shadows besides them. When we look about us and behold the beauty and magnificence of this goodly frame, the order and harmony of the whole creation, let our thoughts from thence take their flight towards that omnipotent wisdom and goodness, which did at
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first produce and doth still establish and uphold the same. When we reflect upon ourselves, let us consider that we are not curious engines without consciousness, merely organised animals; that there is more in us than flesh and blood and bones: even a divine spark, capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying our Maker; powers that pants after immortality, and the nature and capacity of which make us accountable to the Father of Spirits and point to a future world as the place of their full exertion, and noblest enjoyments. Let us often withdraw our thoughts from this earth, this scene of misery, folly and sin and raise them towards that more vast and glorious world, the innocent and blessed inhabitants of which solace themselves eternally in the divine presence, and know no other passion, but an un-mixed joy and an unbounded love. And then consider how the blessed Son of God was sent into this lower world to live among us and die for us, that he might bring us to a portion of the same felicity; and think how he hath overcome the sharpness of death, and opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers and is now sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and is not the less mindful of us, but ever liveth to make intercession for those that come to God by him, and is daily visiting his church with the influences of his Spirit, as the sun reacheth us with his beams.

Sic.

Sec. 2. The serious and frequent consideration of these and such other divine truths, is the most proper method to beget that lively faith which is the foundation of Religion, the spring and root of the divine life. Let me further suggest some particular subjects of meditation for producing the several branches of it. And first to inflame our Souls with the love of God, let us consider the excellency of his nature, and his love and kindness towards us. It is little we know of the divine perfections, and yet that little may suffice to fill our Souls with admiration and love, to ravish our affections, as well as to raise our wonder: for we are not merely creatures of sense, that we should be incapable of any other affection but that which entereth by the eyes. The character of any excellent person whom we have never seen will many times engage our hearts, and make us greatly concerned in all their interest; and what is it I pray you that engages us so much to those with whom we converse? I cannot think that it is only the colour of their face, or their comely proportions, for then we should fall in love with statues, and pictures, and flowers; these outward accomplishments may a little delight the eye, but would never be able to prevail so much on the heart, if they did not represent some vital perfection. We either see or apprehend some greatness of mind, or vigour of spirit, or sweetness of disposition, some brightness, wisdom or goodness, which charm our spirit, and command our love. Now these perfections

ons are not obvious to the sight, the eyes can only discern the signs and effects of them! and if it be the understanding that directs the affection, and vital perfections prevail with it, certainly the excellencies of the divine nature (the traces whereof we cannot but discover in every thing we behold) would not fail to engage our hearts, if we did seriously view & regard them. Shall we not be infinitely more transported with that almighty wisdom and goodness which fills the universe, and displays itself in all the creation, which establisheth the frame of nature, and turneth the mighty wheels of providence, and keepeth the world from disorder and ruin; than with the faint rays of the same perfections which we meet with in our fellow creatures? Shall we doat on the scattered pieces of a rude and imperfect picture, and never be affected with the original beauty? This were an unaccountable stupidity and blindness: whatever we find lovely in a friend or in a saint ought not to engross, but to elevate our affections: we should conclude with ourselves, that if there be so much sweetness in a drop, there must be infinitely more in the fountain; if there be so much splendor in a ray, what must the sun be in its glory?

Nor can we alledge the remoteness of the object, as if God were at too great a distance for our converse or our love: *he is not far from every one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being; we*

we cannot open our eyes, but we must behold some footsteps of his glory, and we cannot turn them toward him, but we shall be sure to find his intent upon us, waiting as it were to catch a look, ready to entertain the most intimate fellowship and communion with us. Let us therefore endeavour to raise our minds to the clearest conceptions of the divine nature: Let us consider all that his works do declare of his word doth discover of him unto us, and let us especially contemplate that visible representation of him which was made in our nature by his Son: who *was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*, and who appeared in the world to discover at once what God is, and what we ought to be. Let us represent him unto our minds as we find him described in the Gospel; and there we shall behold the perfections of the divine nature, though covered with the veil of human infirmities: and when we have framed unto ourselves the clearest notion that we can of a Being, infinite in power, in wisdom, and goodness, the author and fountain of all perfections, let us fix the eyes of our Soul upon it, that our eyes may affect our heart, and while we are musing the fire will burn.

Psalm 3. Especially if heretunto we add the consideration of God's favour and good-will towards us: *nothing*

Heb. 1. 3. Lam. 3. 51. Psal. 39. 3.

things by Christ Jesus, He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. In this was manifest the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. When he had long contended with a stubborn world and visited them with many blessings when all his other gifts could not prevail, he at last gave his beloved Son, to testify his affection and engage theirs. The account which we have of this Saviour's life in the Gospel doth all along present us with the story of God's love, & all the pains that he took and the troubles that he endured were the wonderful effects and uncontrollable evidences of it. But O that last, that dismal scene! Is it possible to remember it and question the kindness and love of God towards us, or deny him ours; Here, here it is (my dear friend) that we should fix our most serious and solemn thoughts, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that we being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.

We ought also frequently to reflect on those particular tokens of favour and love, which God hath be-

John. 8. 32. 1. John, 4. 9. Eph. 3. 17. 18. 19

flowed upon ourselves : how long he hath born with our follies and sins, and waited to be gracious unto us, wrestling as it were, with the stubbornness of our hearts, and essaying every method to reclaim us. We should keep a register in our minds of all eminent blessings and deliverances we have met with ; some whereof have been so conveyed, that we might clearly perceive they were not the issues of chance, but the gracious effects of the divine favour, and the signal returns of our prayers. Nor ought we to imbitter the thoughts of these things with any harsh and unworthy suspicion, as if they were designed on purpose to enhance our guilt, and heighten our eternal damnation. No, no, my friend, God's love, and he hath no pleasure in the ruin of his creatures: if they abuse his goodness, and turn his grace into wantonness, and thereby plunge themselves into the greater depth of guilt and misery : this is the effect of their obstinate wickedness and not the design of the benefits which he bestows.

If these considerations had once begotten in our hearts a real love and affection towards Almighty God, that would easily lead us unto the other branches of Religion, and therefore I shall need say the less of them.

Sett. 4. We shall find our hearts enlarged in charity towards men, by considering the relation wherein they stand unto God, and the impressions of

his image which are stamped upon them. They are not only his creatures, the workmanship of his hands, but such of whom he taketh special care, and for whom he hath a very dear and tender regard, having laid the designs of their happiness before the foundations of the world, and being willing to live and converse with them to all the ages of eternity. The meanest and most contemptible person whom we behold, is the off-spring of Heaven, one of the children of the most High; and however unworthy he may behave himself of that relation, so long as God hath not abdicated and disowned him by a final sentence, he will have us to acknowledge him as one of his, and as such to embrace him with a sincere and cordial affection. You know what a great regard we are wont to have for those that do any ways belong to the person whom we love, how gladly we lay hold on every opportunity to gratify the child or servant of a friend; and sure our love towards God would as naturally spring forth in charity towards men, did we mind the interest he is pleased to take in them, and consider that every Soul is dearer unto him, than all the material world; & that he did not account the blood of his Son too great a price for their redemption.

Again as all men stand in a near relation to God so they have still so much of his image stamped upon them, as may oblige and excite us to love them: in

In some this image is more eminent and conspicuous and we can discern the lovely traits of wisdom and goodness: and though in others it be miserably fulfilled and defaced, yet it is not altogether raised, some lineaments at least do still remain. All men are endued with rational and immortal Souls, with understandings and wills, capable of the highest and most excellent things; and if they be at present disordered and put out of tune by wickedness and folly, this may indeed move our compassion, but ought not in reason to extinguish our love. When we see a person of a rugged humour and perverse disposition, full of malice and dissimulation, very foolish and very proud; it is hard to fall in love with an object that presents itself unto us under an idea so little grateful and lovely. But when we shall consider these evil qualities as the diseases and distempers of a Soul which in itself is capable of all that wisdom and goodness wherewith the best of Saints have ever been adorned, and which may one day come to be raised unto such height of perfection as shall render it a fit companion for the holy Angels; this will turn our aversion into pity, and make us behold him with such feelings, as we should have when we look upon a beautiful body that were mangled with wounds, or disfigured with some loathsome disease; and however we hate the vices, we shall not cease to love the man.

S.A.

Sect. 5. In the next place, for purifying our Souls, and disintangling our affections from the pleasures and enjoyments of this lower life, let us frequently ponder the excellency and dignity of our nature, and what a shameful and unworthy thing it is for so noble and divine a creature as man, to be sunk and immersed in brutish and sensual lusts, or amused with airy and phantastical delights, and so to lose the relish of solid and spiritual pleasures: that the beast should be fed and pampered, and the man and the christian be starved in us. Did we but mind who we are, and for what we were made, this would teach us in a right sense to reverence and stand in awe of ourselves, it would beget a holy modesty and shamefacedness, and make us very shy and reserved in the use of the most innocent and allowable pleasures,

Sect. 6. It will be very effectual to the same purpose, that we frequently raise our minds towards heaven, and represent to our thoughts the joys that are at Gods right hand, those pleasures that endure for ever more: for every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure. If our heavenly country be much in our thoughts, it will make us as strangers and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the Soul, and keep ourselves unsullied from this world, that we may be fit for the enjoyments

ments and felicities of the other. But then we must see that our notions of Heaven be not gross and carnal; that we dream not of a *Mahometan paradise*; nor rest on those metaphors and similitudes by which these joys are sometimes represented, for this might perhaps have a quite contrary effect: it might intangle us further in carnal affections, and we should be ready to indulge ourselves in a very liberal foretaste of those pleasures wherein we had placed our everlasting felicity. But when we come once to conceive aright of those pure and spiritual pleasures; when the happiness we propose to ourselves is from the sight and love and enjoyment of God, and our minds are filled with the hopes and forethoughts of that blessed estate, O how mean & contemptible will all things here below appear in our eyes? with what disdain shall we reject the gross and low pleasures, that would deprive us of those celestial enjoyments, or any way unfit and indispose us for them.

Sect 7. The last branch of Religion is *Humility*, and sure we can never want matter of consideration for begetting it; all our wickedness and imperfections, all our follies and our sins may help to pull down that fond and overweening conceit which we are apt to entertain of ourselves. That which makes any body esteem us, is their knowledge or apprehension of some little good, and their ignorance of a great deal of evil that may be in us: were they thoroughly

thoroughly acquainted with us, they would quickly change their opinion. The thoughts that pass in our hearts in the best and most serious day of our life being exposed unto publick view, would render us either hateful or ridiculous: and now however we conceal our failings from one another, yet sure we are conscious of them ourselves, and some serious reflexions upon them, would much qualify and allay the vanity of our spirits. Thus holy men have come really to think worse of themselves, than of any other person in the world: not but they know that gross and scandalous vices are in their nature more heinous than the surprisals of temptations and infirmity; but because they were much more intent on their own miscarriages, than on those of their neighbours, and did consider all the aggravations of the one, and every thing that may be supposed to diminish and alleviate the other.

But it is well observed by a pious writer, that the deepest and most pure humility doth not so much arise from the consideration of our own faults and defects, as from a calm and quiet contemplation of the divine purity and goodness. Our spots never appear so clearly, as when we place them before this infinite light: and we never seem less in our own eyes, than when we look down upon ourselves from on high. O how little, how nothing do all those shadows of perfection then appear, for which we are wont to value ourselves! That humility which com-

eth

eth from a view of our own sinfulness and misery, is more turbulent and boisterous: but the other layeth full as low, and wanteth nothing but that anguish and vexation wherewith our Souls are apt to be afflicted when they are nearest the object of our thoughts.

SECT. 8. There remains yet another means for begetting a holy and religious disposition in the Soul: and that is fervent and hearty prayer. Holiness is the gift of God; indeed the greatest gift he doth bestow, or we are capable of receiving, and he hath promised his holy spirit to them that ask him. In prayer we make the nearest approaches unto God, and lie open to the influences of heaven: Then it is that the sun of Righteousness doth visit us with his directest rays, and dissipateth our darkness, and imprinteth his image upon our Souls.* I cannot now insist on the advantages of this exercise, or the dispositions wherewith it ought to be performed; and there is no need I should, there being so many books that treat on this subject: I shall only

* *BOERHAAVE, A Dutch Physician of the greatest Name, strongly recommended to others, his own practice, of consecrating the first hour in the morning to prayer and meditation. To this he ascribed the conquest he had gained over the trasfible passions, and declared that he derived from hence vigour and aptitude for business.*

See his Life. P. 33.

tell you, that there is one sort of prayer wherein we make use of the voice which is necessary in publick, and may sometimes have its own advantages in private: and another wherein though we utter no sound, yet we conceive the expressions and form the words, as it were in our minds: so there is a third and more sublime kind of prayer, wherein the Soul takes a higher flight, and having collected all its forces by long and serious meditation, it darteth itself (if I may so speak) towards God in sighs and groans and thoughts too big for expression. As when after a deep contemplation of the divine perfections appearing in all his works of wonder, it addresseth itself unto him in the profoundest adoration of his Majesty and Glory: or when after sad reflexions on its vileness and miscarriages, it prostrates itself before him with the greatest confusion and sorrow, not daring to lift up its eyes, or utter one word in his presence; or when having well considered the beauty of holiness, and the unspeakable felicity of those that are truly good, it panteth after God, and sendeth up such vigorous and ardent desires, as no words can sufficiently express, continuing and repeating each of these acts as long as it finds itself upheld by the force and impulse of the previous meditation.

This mental prayer is of all others the most effectual to purify the Soul, and dispose it unto a holy and religious temper, and may be termed the great secret

secret of devotion, and one of the most powerful instruments of the divine life: and it may be the Apostle hath a particular respect unto it when he saith that *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, making intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered, or, as the original may bear, that cannot be worded.* Yet I do not so recommend this sort of prayer, as to supersede the use of the other; for we have so many several things to pray for, that every petition of this nature, requireth so much time, and so great an attention of Spirit, that it were not easy therein to overtake them all: to say nothing that the deep sighs and heavings of the heart which are wont to accompany it, are something oppressive to nature, & make it hard to continue long in them. But certainly a few of these inward aspirations will do more than a great many fluent and melting expressions.

Sect. 9. Thus (my dear friend) I have briefly proposed the method which I judge proper for moulding the Soul into a holy frame: and the same means which serve to beget this divine temper, must still be practised for strengthening and advancing it: and therefore I shall recommend but one more for that purpose, and 'tis the frequent and conscientious attendance on the Lord's Supper, which is peculiarly appointed to nourish and increase the spiritual life, when once it is begotten in the

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Soul.* All the instruments of Religion do meet together in this ordinance ; and while we address ourselves unto it, we are put to practise all the rules which were mentioned before. Then it is that we lay the strictest obligations on ourselves ; then are our minds raised to the highest contempt of the world, and every grace doth exercise itself with the greatest activity and vigour : all the subjects of contemplation do there present themselves unto us with the greatest advantage ; and then, if ever, doth the Soul make its most powerful sallies toward Heaven, and assault it with a holy and acceptable force. And certainly the neglect or careless performance of this duty, is one of the chief causes that restraineth our religious attainments, and makes us continue of so low a size.

But it is time I should put a close to this letter which is grown to a far greater bulk than at first I intended: If these poor papers can do you the smallest service, I shall think myself very happy in this undertaking : at least I am hopeful you will kindly accept the sincere endeavours of a person who would

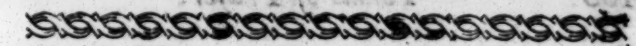
* See the nature of this Institution judiciously considered, on Scriptural Principles, in Dr. Bell's *Practical Enquiry into the Design of the Lords Supper*. printed for Rivington. price 4d.

would fain acquit himself of some part of that which he owes you,

A PRAYER.

AND now O most gracious God, Father and Fountain of mercy and goodness, who hast blessed us with the knowledge of our happiness, and the way that leadeth unto it, excite in our Souls such ardent desires after the one, as may put us forth to the diligent prosecution of the other. Let us neither presume on our own strength, nor distrust thy divine assistance; but while we are doing our utmost endeavours, teach us still to depend on thee for success. Open our eyes O God, and teach us out of thy law. Bless us with an exact and tender sense of our duty, and a knowledge to discern perverse things. O that our ways were directed to keep thy statutes, then shall we not be ashamed, when we have respect unto all thy commandments. Possess our hearts with a generous and holy disdain of all those poor enjoyments which the world holdeth out to allure us, that they may never be able to inveigle our affections, or betray us to any sin: Turn away our eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou us in thy law. Fill our Souls with such a deep sense

and persuasion of those great truths which thou hast re-
 vealed in the Gospel as may influence and regulate
 our whole conversation; and that the life which we
 henceforth live in the flesh, we may live through faith
 in the Son of God. O that the infinite perfections of
 thy blessed nature, and the astonishing expressions of thy
 goodness and love may conquer and over-power our
 hearts; that they may be constantly rising towards thee
 in flames of devoutest affection, and enlarging them-
 selves in sincere and cordial love towards all the world
 for thy sake; and that we may cleanse ourselves from
 all filthiness of flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in
 thy fear, without which we can never hope to behold
 and enjoy thee. Finally O God, grant that the con-
 sideration of what thou art and what we ourselves are
 may both humble and lay us low before thee, and al-
 so stir up in us the strongest and most ardent aspirati-
 ons towards thee. We desire to resign and give up
 ourselves to the conduct of thy holy spirit, lead us in
 thy truth and teach us, for thou art the God of our sal-
 vation. Guide us with thy counsel and afterwards re-
 ceive us unto glory, through thy mercy and grace in Je-
 sus Christ our Saviour. Amen.



FORMS of PRAYER.



A short Prayer at first rising in the Morning.

IT becomes me, O Lord, before the thoughts of this World take possession in my mind, to lay hold on the first opportunity this day affords me, of worshipping Thee my Creator and Governour. I adore the perfections of thy Nature ; and acknowledge thy undeserved Goodness to me. I bless thee for every instance of it, thro' my whole life : and at this time particularly, for the watchful care of thy good Providence, by which I have been secured from the dangers of the last night. I entreat of Thee alone, as the Father & Judge of Mankind, the Pardon of every willful transgression, and omission, of my Duty, thro'

thro' my whole life. I beg this upon those Terms only, which the holiness of thy Nature, and the declarations of Jesus Christ have marked out to us. I here acknowledge myself thy creature and thy servant, and the Disciple of thy Son: and as such obliged by all the strictest ties of Duty, Gratitude and Interest, sincerely to search out and perform thy will; and never willfully to offend against thy holy laws. I now entreat thy Fatherly goodness towards me; and beg of Thee, the Governour of the World, Protection and Favour: professing before Thee, my entire dependence upon thy Wisdom, Power, and Goodness. Defend me, I beseech Thee, this Day, from all Dangers, and sad Accidents. Guard me by the Dispositions of thy good Providence, from all the ways of Sin; and lead me forward in the paths of all Virtue towards the perfection of a reasonable and moral Agent here, and the happiness prepared for him hereafter. Accept, O Lord, this my first service of this Day, according to the Goodness of thine own Nature declared by thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord: in whose Name, and in whose

Words,

Words, I farther call upon Thee,

Our Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation: But deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A short Prayer at Night, just before going to Bed.

O GOD, my great Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, I approach Thee with the sincerest reverence and humility, to pay the last acknowledgements of this Day to Thee, before mine eyes are closed with sleep. I praise and magnify thy Name for all thy mercies: particularly at this time, for thy Preservation of me through the past day; and for that tender care and guidance of thy merciful Providence, by which

which I have been defended from all the great Evils, both Natural and Moral, with which this imperfect State so much abounds. Whatever of Good or Happiness I enjoy, to thee I give the praise of it, and to thy Favour. My willful imperfections and failings; My Transgressions and Neglects, in any instances of thy Law and my Duty, I truly repent of. I take the Shame of them to myself; and seek the pardon of them from thy Fatherly Mercy and Goodness alone, Forgive me I beseech Thee, upon the terms of thy Son's Gospel, whatsoever Thou hast seen amiss in any part of my Conduct, thro' the past day: and take me, and all in whom I am concerned, into thy Care and protection thro' this night. Defend us if it be thy holy will, from the designs of evil men; and from every thing terrible and hurtfull. And lead us all in the paths of thy good Providence, to everlasting life and happiness, thro' thy Fatherly, goodness, and thy love to mankind, declared by thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; in whose Words I conclude the Services of this whole Day.

Our

Our Father, which art in Heaven; Hal-
lowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come,
Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Hea-
ven. Give us this Day our daily Bread:
And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive
them that Trespas against us. And lead us
not into Temptation; But deliver us from
evil: For thine is the Kingdom, the Power:
and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*A longer Prayer, to be used at any other
Time of the Day.*

O GOD, who art the Father and
Lord of all Beings, and glorious in
all Perfection, I thine unworthy Creature
and Servant, with a serious Sense of my
own manifold imperfections, approach thy
Divine Majesty: beseeching Thee, out of
the abundance of thy Goodness, to be
merciful to me: I acknowledge that ma-
ny have been my Failings and Neglects,
thro' the course of my life: and that if
thou shouldest be extreme to mark, and to
punish, what is, in every degree and every
instance

instance, *amiss*; I could not hope for any portion of thy Favour. But, O Lord, the Goodness and Rectitude of thy Nature; and thy Holy Gospel preached by thy Son Jesus Christ, encourage me to hope in Thee for Mercy and Forgiveness; and therefore, as his Disciple, in expectation of thy Favour upon the Terms declared in that Gospel, I earnestly beseech Thee to forgive every thought, every word, and every action, by which I have in the least degree offended Thee, or transgressed the rules of Virtue, and true Religion, from the beginning of my rational Life, to this hour. And this I beg, sincerely resolving to endeavour after a greater degree of Perfection; and a greater conformity to thy Holy Will for the time to come: and hoping on this Condition alone, to be received by Thee to Favour here, and eternal Happiness hereafter.

Accept, likewise, the acknowledgements of my Heart and Mouth, which are so indispensibly due to the Perfections of thy Nature; and thy Goodness to thy Creatures. I adore and celebrate, the unalterable Glories of thy Power, adorned and directed

directed by thy everlast-
 ing Wisdom and Good-
 ness: and bless and praise Thee, for eve-
 ry instance of thy tender Regards to Me,
 and to all the Children of Men. I bless
 Thee, that when it pleased Thee to bring
 me into Being I was made capable of knowing
 and imitating Thee, and of enjoying Thy
 Favour. I bless Thee that I have been
 called to the knowledge of Religion, from
 which I have received many and great Ad-
 vantages, Assistances, and Opportunities,
 towards the answering the true design of
 my Creation. I bless Thee that by the
 Dispositions of thy good Providence, I
 have been led to a just sense of the excel-
 lency of Virtue, and of the importance of
 true Religion; and that this Sense hath
 been improved by the best Examples and
 Sentiments of Others, and by many pecu-
 liar Instances of thy merciful Care and
 Goodness.

I praise thy holy Name for all that thy
 Son Jesus Christ did, and taught, and suf-
 fered, in this World, in order to redeem
 Mankind from the power and punishment
 of

their Sins ; to lead them more effectually to the Knowledge of Thee, and the practice of their Duty ; and to confirm to them the reasonable hope of being immortally happy hereafter. For these and all thy Mercies, which respect another and a better life than the present, my Soul doth magnify Thee, O Lord, and all the powers within me praise thy Holy Name.

Nor ought I to neglect to thank thee for those many instances of thy Mercy, by which Thou hast made my estate in this short but uncertain life, much happier than it could have been without them: for affording me not only the necessary supports, but many of the most desirable conveniences of such a state. Continue, O Lord, I beseech Thee, these thy temporal Favours to me, if Thou seeest it consistent with my chief and eternal Good : if not lead me to eternal life in whatever paths thou seeest fit. I resign myself, and all my concerns, into thine Hands ; and entreat Thee to be my Guide, and my Governour, unto death. Let the Sense of these thine

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undeserved mercies inspire me with such a gratitude as may show itself in the suitable returns of a good life, and Holy conversation : and with such a love of Thee as may express itself in the keeping of thy Commandments.

Whatever moral imperfections there are still in me ; direct me to the knowledge of them, and to the proper means of putting an end to them : And assist me, by all the methods of thy wisdom and Goodness, in the great work I have to do: the perfecting my mind in all that is truly excellent : and the working out of my salvation in the methods agreeable to thy Holy Will, and to the Obligations of a reasonable Creature, and moral Agent,

I beseech thee likewise to be merciful to the whole world. Inlighten the dark corners of it with the true knowledge of Thee, and of thy Gospel, in its simplicity: and sow the seeds of all Virtue and happiness in all parts of it. Lead all professed Christians to Truth, and Righteousness,
and

and Peace ; that so they may be an Honour to the Religion they profess. Put an end to Idolatry and Superstition, and all spiritual Tyranny and Oppression. Give an open check to all that pride and ambition, which disturb the World. Quiet the turbulent spirits, and compose the unchristian animosities of mankind.

Look down, with mercy upon this my native Country. Pour down all thy blessings, Spiritual and Temporal upon our most gracious KING, and his Royal Family. Endow those who are called to any Office, under Him, for the administration of Justice or Government amongst us, with all Gifts and Abilities necessary for the discharge of their great trust : and prosper and protect them in the due Execution of it. Lead all the Ministers of thy Gospel to teach thy Truth in simplicity : and by their example and doctrine, to bring themselves, and those who hear them, to Eternal Life.

Extend thy Mercy and Compassion to all

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all afflicted Persons; of whatsoever sort or degree, their Afflictions may be; to all who are in a state of uneasiness of Mind, or Pain of Body; a State of want or sorrow; of Persecution, or Oppression: giving to them all the supports and assistances suitable to their several distresses: and, in thy good time, an happy issue out of all their calamities. Bless all in whom I am more nearly concerned, with every thing truly good for them. Shower down thy mercies on my Friends and Benefactors; granting them all happiness here and hereafter. Forgive all my Enemies, if such there be; and shew thy mercy unto them.

Finally, O Lord, Pardon all my past sins; Guide and govern me, by thy Holy Spirit, in my sincere Endeavours to attain everlasting life. Promote my true happiness, as thou seekest fit: and mercifully receive me, and my imperfect services, according to thy Goodness declared by thy Well-beloved Son Jesus Christ: by whom all honour and glory be given unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end
Amen.

A Prayer for a Family to be used in the Morning, or at Night.

O LORD, perfect in Wisdom, Goodness, and Power; glorious in all that can be truly called Perfection; We thy creatures and thy servants, would desire to prostrate ourselves before thee, in the deepest sense of our own unworthiness, and of thy lovely and incomprehensible perfections: Acknowledging the glories of thy Nature, as it is in itself; and thy great Goodness to us, and to the whole of thy Creatures.

We wish to be truly sensible of the great happiness of knowing Thee; and of imitating Thee: and of enjoying the communications of thy favour hereafter: upon which account, it highly becomes Us to praise Thee for that Act of Goodness in our Creation, by which Thou hast endowed us with Faculties fitted for the attainment of this unspeakable happiness; and for the enjoyment of the highest Good hereafter.

We

We praise Thee for thy Great Goodness in our preservation here, ever since We were brought into Being: not only as it respects this World, in which we now live; but as by it we are enabled to make the better provision for our everlasting interest in the World to come; and have greater opportunities of improving our Souls in Virtue, and of securing our happiness for ever. More particularly we now bless Thee for the care of thy providence over us, by which we have been preserved in safety through the past [*Day, or Night,*] and mercifully defended from all dangers and distresses.

It becomes us likewise to acknowledge thy bounty and goodness, manifested to us through every part of our lives, to this time; to thank Thee for that measure of health, and Strength, and Quiet, which We have hitherto enjoyed; for the Comforts and supports of all these necessities and conveniencies, without which We should be much more unhappy in this state, than We now are; and for all other circumstances

stances and advantages of Life, which help to make our passage through this World more happy, or more tolerable, than otherwise it could be.

But above all, we bless and magnify thy great and glorious Name for thy tender regards to our everlasting Happiness in a better State hereafter : for sending thy Son into the world to declare to us the certainty of a future State of Rewards and punishments ; and for all that he did, and taught and suffered, in order to reconcile mankind to Thee ; and to guide us all to eternal life and glory : for the great happiness of a good and virtuous Education ; and for those peculiar dispositions of thy providence which have often guarded Us from many particular and hazardous Trials and Temptations. For these, and for all other thy mercies, which concern our great and eternal interests, We sincerely thank Thee, O Lord, and will ever praise thy Holy Name.

It is with shame and grief that we reflect

fleet upon the Returns that we have made
 to so much mercy. We confess, O Lord,
 that We have not lived as becomes rea-
 sonable Creatures called to the knowledge
 of such a God, and of such a Saviour.
 Many have been our failings; many have
 been our omissions, and neglects, in the
 performance of our Duty, and in the per-
 fecting ourselves in all virtue. Many have
 been our offences, in Thought, Word and
 Deed, and against thy divine Majesty: and
 many are still our imperfections. But, O
 merciful Father, We beseech Thee in the
 name of thy Son *Jesus Christ*, to pardon
 us now returning to Thee, with the humble
 purpose of regarding more strictly the ob-
 ligations of Gratitude and Obedience We
 are under; and of living, for the time to
 come, more like thy Servants, and like
 Christians.
 And now, O Lord, confessing and re-
 nouncing all our Sins; and hoping for
 the pardon of all that is past, through thy
 Son *Jesus Christ*, as far only as we sincere-
 ly endeavour to reform and amend what is
 wrong. ever

ever We know to be amiss in our selves : We beseech Thee, so to concur with us, by thy merciful Providence, and good Spirit, that in the future conduct of our lives We may better answer the Ends of our most holy Religion; and adorn the Gospel which we profess to believe.

Let the Experience of thy repeated mercies, inflame us with a resolution of making suitable returns to them. Let the belief of future Glories raise our Minds above the sordid views of this World. Let the consideration of thine in-
 al-
 lible Wisdom, and undoubted goodness, teach us heartily and quietly to submit our selves to all the Dispensations of Thy Providence towards us, as to the Will of One, who hath always wise and excellent purposes to serve ; and knows what is best for us, infinitely better than We possibly can. Let the example of our blessed Saviour, ever placed before our Eyes, direct our steps in every Station of Life, & every instance of Duty : and let our Hopes and Affections be unmoveably fixed
 upon

upon those Rewards which are laid up in Heaven for all who by patient continuing in Well-doing, seek after Glory and Immortality. Finally, Let the Consideration of thy Holy Presence every where, govern all our Thoughts, Words and Actions, as under the eye of thy Majesty: and lying open to Thee, our supreme Governour and Judge; that so our irregular Passions may lose their Power over us; and We may daily proceed to greater degrees of all Holiness and Virrue.

We now particularly desire to put our selves under thy Protection, this [*Day, or Night,*] and to implore thy Fatherly care over us; that no Evil may approach us; but that our Souls and Bodies may be safe under that good and powerful Providence, in which We entirely trust.

We extend likewise our regards to all the World of reasonable Creatures; and pray for the happiness and good estate of all mankind: that they may all know and worship and obey, Thee as they ought; and

and particularly that all who name the Name of CHRIST, may depart from iniquity and live as becomes his holy Gospel. Put a stop to the miseries occasioned by Ambition and Tyranny, whether Temporal or Spiritual. Put an end to every degree of Idolatry and Superstition: Persecution and Oppression: and give success to the labours of all, who study the happiness of thy Creatures; and preach the Gospel of thy Son, in simplicity and love.

Regard with much mercy, these Nations to which we belong. Pardon our crying sins: and lead all sinners amongst us to true and unfeigned repentance; that Iniquity may not be our ruin, or prevent the Mercies we might otherwise hope for. Pour down the choicest of thy Blessings upon our most Gracious Sovereign, King GEORGE; and so direct Him, and all that are in Authority under Him; by thy gracious guidance, that they may faithfully discharge the great trust reposed in Them by being a Terror to Evil-doers only, and a Praise to all that do well. Let the remembrance

Membrance of the great and solemn account to come, engage all orders of Men amongst us, conscientiously to perform their Duties in their several Places and Stations with all faithfulness and charity.

Bless, we beseech Thee, with all blessings of Soul and Body, our Relations and Friends: leading them to all Virtue and Happiness here, and rewarding them with Eternal Life hereafter. Requite the kindness of all who have done or designed us any good: and Pardon the malice of all who have done, or wished, us any evil; guiding them to Repentance, and shewing thy mercy upon them.

We have a deep sense, O Lord, of the miseries experienced in this World: of the wants of the Poor and Needy; of the Sickneses, the Pains, and Distresses, of the afflicted part of Mankind. We truly sympathize with them: and Intercede for them, that in thy Providence they may find Relief: and have reason to rejoice, at the End, for the Days wherein they have seen adversity. And

And now O Lord, We again commend ourselves, and all belonging to us, to thy gracious protection and care: May we be inclined to refer ourselves wholly to thee for what is truly necessary and good for us in this World; and above all we entreat Thee, effectually to dispose the way of thy Servants towards the Attainment of everlasting Salvation in the World to come; and beseeching Thee to hear & accept us as the Disciples of thy Son *Jesus Christ* our Lord; Through whom be given to thee, our Father in heaven, everlasting Praises. Amen

THE END.

ERRATA.

The Reader is desired to correct the following errors, or any other which may have escaped the eye in the review of the piece. Preface P. 5, line 2 for *recommends* read *recommend*: line 17 for *performance* read *performances*. In the Life P. 9: 1 18 for *their* read *the*; 1. 19, after, *paying it*, read *in*. The Life of God &c. P. 6. 1. 3 from the bot. for *pious men* read *a pious man* 1. 2 for *bear* read *bears*: 1. 1 for *them* read *him*. P. 75. 1. 18 for *comes* read *come*. P. 78. 1. 8 from the bot. for *prayers* read *prayer*, P. 80. 1 7 for *pants* read *pant*. P. 81. 1. 18 for *their* read *his*. P. 105 after *knowledge of* read *a*. P. 113 1. 11 blot out *the first and* P. 118. 1. 9 blot out, *and*.

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